

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

The prospects for the year ahead will be dictated by the determination with which we take our next steps - the vigour with which we pursue the process which has begun.

Above all by the conclusion, at the summit meeting planned to take place this year in Moscow, of a Soviet/United States treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons together with observance of the ABM Treaty for an agreed period of time.

By the rapid elaboration of a convention on chemical weapons within the framework of this Conference.

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(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

The Conference's agenda for this year includes issues of major importance to all mankind. As we emphasized at the Prague session, we consider the most urgent issue to be the completion of the drafting of a convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, progress towards a complete nuclear weapon test ban and prevention of an arms race in outer space. Encouraging steps have been taken in these directions. First and foremost through the Washington summit meeting. Through the Six-nation Initiative, which was substantially elaborated upon in the Stockholm Declaration of January this year. And also through the urgency of the calls addressed to the Geneva Conference by the entire international community, as embodied in the relevant resolutions of the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. I should now like to dwell briefly on these crucial issues.

The Conference has come within reach of concluding work on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the elimination of stockpiles of such weapons, including the industrial base for their production. It could be finalized within a very short time - as early as the first phase of the current session. Given, of course, political will and concentrated negotiating efforts focused entirely on completing work on the 10 per cent or so of the text that has yet to be agreed.

However, I wish to say frankly that we have been seriously worried by developments running in just the opposite direction. In particular, the decision to begin production of binary weapons and the intention of deploying them in Europe, as well as arguments attempting to justify an alleged necessity for chemical rearmament. We see in them a dangerous trend towards destabilization of the political and military situation.

It is of the utmost importance that the negotiating process should be expedited rather than slowed down. Already there is agreement in principle on the scope of the future Convention, which must cover binary weapons too. All the essential elements of the Convention are already at hand.