

Mr. VENERA (Czech Republic): Mr. President, it is an honour for me to address this central body of multilateral negotiations on disarmament which works this month under your distinguished and brilliant presidency. Allow me to thank on this occasion Ambassador Pérez Novoa of Cuba for the excellent manner in which he presided over our Conference during the past weeks. The Czech Republic attaches great importance to its deliberations which in the past led to the conclusion of such important disarmament treaties as the

(Mr. Venera, Czech Republic)

non-proliferation Treaty, the partial test-ban Treaty or quite recently the Convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. Czechoslovakia participated actively in the elaboration of these agreements and in their application. As one of the successor States to the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic we therefore feel associated with what the Conference on Disarmament has achieved so far.

As the Conference concentrated in the past years on the elaboration of the chemical weapons Convention, it should also in the nearest future focus on one or two "promising" issues so that it does not take another decade before new agreements are delivered. The arms race of the cold war period assured a lot of work to be accomplished by institutions like this Conference and it should be accomplished without undue delay. All agenda items should be addressed with equal responsibility. However, some will require longer-term efforts while other tasks seem both urgent as well as achievable in the foreseeable future. A nuclear test ban is an urgent issue since continued nuclear-weapon testing could hardly contribute to the success of the NPT review conference and the required prolongation of the functioning of the Treaty already in 1995. It also seems achievable in view of the constructive approach of the nuclear-weapon States embodied in the ongoing moratorium on nuclear tests. We are looking forward to the early opening of multilateral negotiations on the comprehensive test ban. They will not need to start from scratch; a number of verification issues of the future test ban have been usefully discussed both in the GSE as well as in the relevant working group. The Czech Republic intends to assure an active participation of its experts in the GSE and its share in the future transmission of seismic data which will be essential for CTB verification.