

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

The time has come for us to proceed to a thorough re-examination not only of some of our goals, but of our ways and means of approaching them. This task could be handled, I think, at least in its preliminary stage, by a small group of our most experienced members. The Group of Seven or some such informal team could possibly be given a new lease of life and proceed as soon as feasible, with the assistance of our Secretary-General, who has the wisdom and the imagination to be of great assistance in this exercise. Before the end of the first part of our session we could have the core proposals from this Group, which we would then examine in depth at informal plenary sessions.

Unless we effectively broaden our working agenda, this Conference could shrink to no more than a de facto preparatory committee for the future convention on chemical weapons, and only later seek new missions to accomplish. This is a minimalist approach and one that falls far short of the expectations of the international community, one that would make a mockery of our many declarations and resolutions and one fraught with the danger of the long agony of a progressively more enfeebled negotiating body.

I leave these thoughts with the Conference, with the conviction that the time has come for aggressively creative new thinking, and that we have "in-house" the ability and the experience to suggest ways and means for our renewal and for enduring and perhaps even greater usefulness in a dramatically altered international political environment.

So much for what I think we should urgently do of a structural nature with this Conference, to enable it to catch up with the pace of events in the outside world. We are heartened to see that a very large number of non-member States have sought to join us as observers. We support all their applications - which should be dealt with as a package and immediately - and we are sure that all of us can only benefit from the widest possible enlargement of our universe of active players.

We have already praised Ambassador Pierre Morel of France for what he did as a leader of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We feel no reluctance to do so again. We could not ask for more diligence, creative imagination and unflagging enthusiasm. He has brought us close to completing the task, and I feel confident that Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius will prove quite an able successor.

On the overall question of chemical weapons, I would like to make just a few additional remarks. My delegation is persuaded that we are ready to complete - in a relatively short time - a very competent draft, capable of gaining immediate universal adherence, that would constitute a truly universal and non-discriminatory convention banning chemical weapons. We are further persuaded that a draft of this breadth would command such immediate and overwhelming support that no country could afford to be perceived as a non-signatory. The Paris Conference gave us a valuable measure of the amount of repudiation and moral condemnation that such weapons provoke. A major conference for the signature of the Convention - and at the highest level - would command such prestige and moral authority that a realistic evaluation would indicate that no Government could refrain from acceding. Failure to become a party would entail an unacceptable degree of suspicion and isolation.