

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

... In the same spirit, I am very pleased to announce that a joint declaration on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons will be signed tomorrow in Mendoza, Argentina, by the Ministers of External Relations of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The Government of Uruguay will also adhere to this instrument. This very important declaration will reaffirm our formal engagement not to develop, produce, acquire or use those inhumane means of warfare and will also address the question of exports of chemical substances that can be used as precursors for chemical weapons, pending the conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. This important collective step in the field of regional security and confidence-building constitutes also a very relevant contribution to international efforts to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. It demonstrates the readiness of our countries to make all efforts to avoid the introduction of weapons of mass destruction in the region while at the same time preserving the whole gamut of peaceful uses of science and technology for our economic development and the welfare of our peoples. I am quite sure, incidentally, that Ambassador García Robles would be delighted to hear this announcement were he still in our midst.

As you are aware, Argentina and Brazil presented recently to the UNDC a proposal for the multilateral consideration of criteria related to the transfer of "sensitive" technologies. We are jointly taking the initiative of promoting the discussion of that subject in the next session of the General Assembly. We would be very interested that many more delegations could react to the document presented to the UNDC, as some representatives of industrialized countries already did, such as Ambassador Gérard Errera, of France.

The recent events in our fast-changing world demonstrated that improved mechanisms are needed to prevent threats to international security. In the perspective of countries like Brazil, such mechanisms, stringent as they may be, should not impose additional barriers to technology access, which is essential for our development. In other words, many difficulties are faced because of the lack of predictable, clear and universally applicable rules for the transfer of dual-use technology.

About two years ago, when I was the representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament, I stated that - and I am quoting myself - "verification will undoubtedly be the crucial subject of disarmament negotiations, multilateral or bilateral, from now to the end of this century". I am very glad to see today that many countries seem to share those views. Proposals were presented aiming at the establishment of a verification regime for a nuclear test ban; measures to strengthen the biological weapons Convention may also be examined at the forthcoming review conference of that Convention, to take place over the next weeks in Geneva. Another evidence of the importance of this subject is the careful attention it received in this year's session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.