

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

One of the few more or less positive aspects of the 1984 session now coming to a close has been the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, whose mandate is directed towards a specific objective "... to start the full and complete process of negotiations, developing and working out the convention ...". In reply to the question "Have we begun to fulfil this mandate", we must acknowledge that much more could have been achieved in the Ad Hoc Committee and in its three Working Groups. This year saw a further useful exchange of views and many informal consultations, and work was finally begun on drafting and compiling the texts of some articles relating to certain aspects of the future convention. For all these efforts we should like to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Ekéus, as well as the Chairmen of the three Working Groups. At the same time, like many other delegations, we should like to draw attention to the fact that the position adopted by a very limited number of delegations or, to be more precise, by one delegation, which so far has not displayed sufficient flexibility and good will and is not making the necessary effort to overcome the remaining differences, may in future constitute an obstacle to progress in negotiations on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

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Mr. FIELDS (United States of America): Mr. President, earlier this summer I made several statements outlining the provisions of the draft chemical weapons convention presented on 18 April by the United States delegation in document CD/500. Now, as the 1984 session of the Conference draws to a close, I want to return to the subject of prohibition of chemical weapons.

I want to emphasize at the outset that my Government is not satisfied with the snail's pace at which the Conference on Disarmament is progressing toward a completed convention. Over the last 18 months the United States has made a series of major initiatives in an attempt to speed things up. And we welcome such initiatives by others -- for example, the recent proposals by a number of representatives that negotiations be conducted in the autumn rather than having a hiatus of almost six months. This is a very constructive move that the United States strongly supports.

In this connection, I am very disappointed that the United States draft convention -- a noble contribution presented to this Conference by the second highest official of my Government -- has not been given serious attention by the Soviet delegation. There has been no response to the offer made by Vice-President Bush on 18 April -- and repeated since -- to meet with the Soviet delegation members to explain any provisions that might have been unclear. Nor, judging from the Soviet statement of 9 August, have they taken any account of the explanations provided by the United States in its plenary statements. Rather than a constructive, positive response, the United States initiative has received only rhetorical questions and critical comments from the Soviet delegation.