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(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

I conclude then this statement with what should by rights have come first: an expression of my gratitude for the unstinting co-operation of all delegations as these complex negotiations have unfolded, and with a very special word of thanks for the secretariat, Mr. Bensmail, his staff and interpreters, whose willing support contributed materially to our endeavour.

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(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

It is not too much to suggest, then, that a new consensus is emerging which shows that this institution can work -- and work well. I would refer to an interesting supporting phenomenon: we have ceased to hear such frequent appeals for the display of "political will", which often meant the simple rallying by someone to the point of view of someone else; instead we have witnessed true evidence of "political will" in the efforts of those to reconcile different points of view on a balanced basis. In this sense, true political will means not the will to expostulate, but to negotiate.

Our collective will to negotiate in the Working Group on Chemical Weapons is an example.

The Working Group was given a mandate to negotiate, and by negotiate, I mean convene with others with a view to obtaining compromise of differences and agreement or commitment. What the Working Group has achieved is significant progress towards the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention through negotiation on matters of substance and form as well as procedure. For the process of compromise to work required each delegation to observe a rule, unwritten though it may be but essential in its observance to the success of any negotiation: that negotiation be conducted with the temptation to engage in debate held firmly in check. That compromise was achieved is all the more remarkable because the issue of chemical weapons is sometimes an emotional one, and perhaps rightly so; and this aspect is matched by the issue's technical complexity.

(Cont'd)