

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

tragedies which have occurred in recent years. Hence the guaranteeing of the universal nature of the future convention is a goal in which all the members of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as all other States, should have a keen interest. This idea was also reflected in the recent Soviet-American statement on chemical weapons, adopted following talks in Moscow between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Secretary of State Baker of the United States. This statement has just been referred to by the distinguished Ambassador Ledogar of the United States, with whom (I hope he will forgive me) we expended a good deal of effort and nervous energy in Moscow to arrive in the end at what we consider a good statement.

Ambassador Ledogar has already described its content. Consequently, without repeating what has already been said I should like to note a few important points in this connection. The statement reaffirms the aim of finalizing the convention at the earliest date. The statement also stresses the desire of both parties, even as the multilateral negotiations proceed, to draw up a bilateral agreement on reciprocal obligations, including, *inter alia*, the destruction of a considerable part of the two countries' chemical weapons stockpiles. In this connection I should like to stress that in the view of the Soviet Union, such an agreement should contain provision for both the elimination and reduction of chemical weapons stockpiles (this is certainly correct) and the cessation of the production of chemical weapons. In the statement adopted as a result of the recent meeting of ministers stress is laid on the readiness of both sides to reduce their stockpiles of chemical weapons down to very low levels in the first eight years after the convention enters into force. Of course, all remaining stocks of chemical weapons will have to be eliminated, as the statement says, over the subsequent two years. Our position in this regard is unequivocal. We are in favour of the reaffirmation of the already agreed 10-year period for the elimination of all stockpiles of chemical weapons. Of course we agree that all States which are capable of possessing chemical weapons should accede to the convention.

Moreover, we consider that work to this end should begin now, without any delays. At the same time we are far from convinced that the completion of the process of elimination of chemical weapons in the course of the already established 10-year destruction period should be made dependent on accession to the convention by one particular State or another. We are experiencing serious concern in connection with the implications of such an approach, although, as I have already said, we subscribe to the aim of securing participation in the convention by all relevant countries. In the statement it is asserted - and we also deem this to be important - that a multilateral convention should contain a provision whereby all production of chemical weapons must cease from the moment of its entry into force.

In conclusion I should like to say the following. We sincerely welcome all those who, in keeping with the decision just adopted in the Conference, will join us in our work. We can see a continuation and a strengthening of the tendency towards an increase in the number of countries which manifest not theoretical but practical interest in our work. This applies not only to negotiations on chemical weapons, but also to a number of other bodies which either operate within the framework of the Conference on a permanent basis, or else are set up on an annual basis. In supporting the decision just adopted,