

(Mr. Monshemvula, Zaire)

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Negotiations to arrive at an effective and verifiable convention banning chemical weapons are well under way. These weapons of mass destruction are spreading into several countries, and are currently sowing devastation in the Iran/Iraq war and in Kampuchea. It is therefore of the greatest urgency for the members of the Conference to work actively to overcome the few outstanding difficulties so that a draft convention is submitted to the forty-second regular session of the United Nations General Assembly pursuant to the letter and spirit of its resolution 41/58 B. The convention, while safeguarding the civilian chemical industry and international co-operation in this field should contain provisions designed to achieve the destruction of existing arsenals and ban all super-toxic lethal chemicals and other chemicals used for military purposes.

The violation by some States of the provisions of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, is an additional reason to conclude as early as possible a convention on chemical weapons which would be complementary to the Convention on biological weapons that entered into force on 26 March 1975, which has been called the first world disarmament treaty and is in fact the sole international legally binding instrument in which the parties have committed themselves to prohibiting and preventing the development, manufacture and stockpiling of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction, and have also assumed a commitment to destroy them or to divert them to peaceful purposes.

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12

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Glancing around the various continents, it is easy to see that Africa is the least well-protected, least secure continent. We are fully appreciative of efforts made to remove the nuclear threat. The 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco created a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. The Treaty of Rarotonga of 6 August 1985 gave rise to a denuclearized zone in the South Pacific. In the Balkans a Declaration has been made concerning a zone which is not only nuclear-free but also chemical-weapons free. These are specific, tangible steps which constitute effective measures to guarantee lasting security and peace for these regions. The Nuclear Powers should logically sign all these instruments. In Africa the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa goes back to 1964. Today this Declaration is defied by the odious policy of the racist puppet Government of Pretoria. South Africa, bolstered by its nuclear capacity, threatens the whole continent with nuclear war. As His Excellency Ambassador Afande of Kenya so properly stressed in his statement on 24 February, South Africa is allegedly preparing Marion Island in the Antarctic for the installation of nuclear weapons.