

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

... I have said a great deal about Europe, and I hope that the Conference will forgive me for this. Two lessons can be learnt from the dramatic changes on the political scene. The first, which I have just mentioned, is the connection between security, arms control and domestic and foreign political structures. Weapons are basically a symptom and not the cause of political problems. The second lesson is that the vanishing of tensions between East and West makes it all the more imperative to consider security and the factors which threaten it on a more global scale. Although the confrontation between East and West is diminishing, there is no general decline in the number of weapons and potential conflicts in other parts of the world. On the contrary, proliferation continues: chemical weapons, conventional weapons, missiles and the technology to produce these missiles. Other categories have officially been banned, but the ban is cracking dangerously; this applies to biological weapons. In the field of nuclear weapons the non-proliferation Treaty has stemmed but not prevented efforts towards proliferation. Let me now examine a few of these questions briefly, because you, distinguished delegates to the Conference on Disarmament, have such an important role to play in this regard.

The 1980s have shown how much suffering can be inflicted when States strike each other's cities with missiles. I do not wish to hide the fact that I am deeply concerned about the increasing number of States which are acquiring ballistic missiles, either by importing them or by producing them themselves. These missiles can be equipped with conventional warheads, but are also suitable for chemical and nuclear warheads. At the same time as radical reductions in stocks of nuclear missiles have been proposed or already implemented between East and West, there is a threat of missiles - sometimes with the same range as the category banned - being developed and introduced in other parts of the world. I therefore believe that we must call a halt to the proliferation of missiles and missile technology. This is a global problem for which effective solutions must be devised in as broad a framework as possible. It would appear that the Missile Technology Control Régime, set up by a small number of countries, offers a promising basis for this. The Netherlands takes a sympathetic attitude towards this régime, since it is our political conviction that no opportunity to safeguard stability on a world scale should be missed. We are therefore seriously considering the question of acceding to the Missile Régime.