

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

"The Geneva Protocol constitutes the only rule applying to chemical weapons, and this will continue to be so until the treaty which is currently being negotiated takes its place in international law. But if it might be dangerous to try and amend the Protocol, it is essential to reaffirm it and to declare that the commitment contained therein will not be betrayed. Because that, it seems to me, is what is expected from those meeting here: a formal declaration that States refuse to have recourse to chemical weapons and consider it imperative to eliminate them from the face of the Earth. The reaffirmation of a legal, political and moral prohibition, the expression of a clear resolve to achieve not only the prohibition of use but also of development, stockpiling and transfer: these are the two objectives of our Conference. They are interrelated. We will not achieve a complete ban unless we reaffirm today the prohibition of use. This prohibition will in turn be all the better underpinned when production, stockpiling and transfer have become impossible."

Mexico has been a party to the Geneva Protocol since 1932 and, I am proud to say, without any reservations. During the almost 60 years which have elapsed since that date, not only has it scrupulously respected the obligations it entered into then, but it has also demonstrated in practical terms its resolve never to resort to the use of chemical weapons. We welcomed the provisions of the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference, which by consensus adopted provisions such as the following:

"The participating States are determined to promote international peace and security throughout the world in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and to pursue effective disarmament measures. In this context, they are determined to prevent any recourse to chemical weapons by completely eliminating them. They solemnly affirm their commitments not to use chemical weapons and condemn such use. They recall their serious concern at recent violations as established and condemned by the competent organs of the United Nations. They support the humanitarian assistance given to the victims affected by chemical weapons ...

"The participating States stress the necessity of concluding, at an early date, a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons, and on their destruction. This convention shall be global and comprehensive and effectively verifiable. It should be of unlimited duration. To this end they call on the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to redouble its efforts, as a matter of urgency, to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues and to conclude the convention at the earliest date. All States are requested to make, in an appropriate way, a significant contribution to the negotiations in Geneva by undertaking efforts in the relevant fields."

It should also be borne in mind in this respect that, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized in his statement to the same Paris Conference: