

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

is about in hosting this Conference. It is fundamental to our approach that the Government-Industry Conference that we are proposing to host take place in the context of the important negotiations being conducted here, in the Conference on Disarmament, on a chemical weapons convention; that it support fully those negotiations; and that in its own way it contributes to and moves forward those negotiations. There is no separate agenda. This Conference is what we are about in pursuing chemical weapons objectives, and the universal chemical weapons convention is the only objective that we are seeking to obtain. We believe the Government-Industry Conference will provide that support and contribute to the early conclusion of that convention - which we must achieve without further delay.

In addition to bringing about an increased dialogue between government and industry, it is also important to ensure that those countries which are not members or observers of the CD be fully informed about the convention which is being negotiated, so that they can give it their support and become parties to it at an early stage. Australia has been active in international efforts towards this objective. In June 1988 our Prime Minister announced that Australia would launch an initiative to raise regional awareness about chemical weapons issues. In that respect Australian officials have visited South-East Asia, Indo-China and the South Pacific to promote understanding of and support for the chemical weapons convention. This dialogue will be followed by a regional seminar which is also to be held in Canberra on 3 and 4 August, which we believe will reinforce the growing regional consensus in support of a convention. This may be an example which could usefully be followed by other CD members in their own regions.