

(The President)

Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare; the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies; the 1971 Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof; and the 1977 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. This illustrates the importance attached by Algeria to the multilateral disarmament process, which as never before stands at a point conducive to the emergence of new multilateral agreements, among them those for which drafts have reached a very advanced stage of negotiation. I have in mind the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons that has been under negotiation for more than a decade in the Conference on Disarmament. Today we can no longer allow ourselves to become bogged down in purely technical and procedural consideration that will only cause an undue postponement of the long-awaited deadline of the conclusion of the convention this year.

My delegation wishes to pay particular tribute to the devotion and perseverance with which the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Adolf von Wagner of Germany, is pursuing his mission to achieve that objective. I can assure him of the full cooperation and wholehearted readiness of the Algerian delegation to assist him in discharging his tasks. We appreciate the magnitude of the problems that remain to be solved. We also know how much has already been done. As the negotiations now stand, only a genuine political will, which is in any event essential, stemming from a spirit of mutual compromise, can overcome the difficulties that still remain - they are actually few in number - on the most controversial political issues. In the view of my delegation, the future convention, however many implications are involved for the chemical industry, remains first and foremost a fundamental security treaty for the international community as a whole. As such, it is imperative that its multilateral character should remain predominant and should consequently take into account on an equal footing all the legitimate expressions of concern. The executive body of the future convention should therefore be representative of the international community as a whole.

In order to ensure the universality of the convention, all States, regardless of size and importance, should have the same opportunity to serve on the executive council. To that end, only equitable geographical distribution among the various regions of the world can offer a good basis for the representativeness of the international community within it. It remains understood, of course, that due account will be taken of the industrial criterion in each region's selection of its own representatives. Bearing constantly in mind the multilateral dimension of the future convention, the executive council must be entrusted with a central role in the implementation and application of the future convention. This role is all the more essential as it is related to concerns regarding compliance with the convention. These same concerns, although unilateral in origin, will certainly come to be shared by all the States parties, mainly because of the nature of what is at stake for the security of all States if the convention is not respected.