

(Mr. Oul-Rouis, Algeria)

At the present stage in the work of the Committee on Disarmament, the negotiations on chemical weapons are indisputably the only sphere in which agreement is possible.

While it is true that the negotiations are proceeding with difficulty because of the divergencies of views that persist, nevertheless they offer promising prospects. The establishment of contact groups each responsible for looking into a given aspect of the future convention has had the merit of bringing out clearly the areas of agreement and the points where there is disagreement. The time has come for the major Powers to show the political will necessary to permit the solution of the problems that are preventing the Committee from passing on to the phase of drafting the articles of the future convention. The proposals made by the Soviet delegation at the last session and those put forward at the beginning of this session by the United States delegation should serve as the basis for finding solutions acceptable to all parties, so that the present difficulties can be overcome.

(Mr. Skalli, Morocco)

The question of the prohibition of chemical weapons is one of those to which we all attach great importance. This conclusion of a convention to ban such weapons seems to us an essential measure of disarmament. The progress achieved during the meetings of the Working Group concerned with this matter is promising. In fact, the state of advancement of the work of this Group suggests that we should be in a position shortly to begin negotiations proper and to proceed in the very near future to the drafting of the text of a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. It was with satisfaction that we heard the statement made in this regard on 10 February by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Fields. We consider that this statement gives us cause for optimism.