

(Mr. Calderón, Peru)

"The Group of 21 expects the Canberra Conference to unambiguously endorse the objective of an early comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons and lend its support to the ongoing negotiations to that effect within the Conference on Disarmament."

(Continued in Spanish)

I have requested the Secretary-General, Ambassador Komatina, to distribute this text as an official document of the Conference.

CD/PV.527

15

Mr. REESE (Australia): I seek the floor today to respond briefly to the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 21 by the distinguished representative of Peru. On behalf of my Government I would like to assure members of the Group of 21 that the Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons to be held in Canberra from 18 to 22 September will support the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a chemical weapons convention, and the conference in Canberra will do this by focusing on measures to conclude and implement the convention.

The structure of the conference in Canberra is designed to encourage discussion in support of the chemical weapons convention - and not for any other purpose, as indeed the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Evans, said in his address to this Conference on 13 June last.

The Australian Government has consulted extensively with a wide range of countries in determining the final shape of the conference. The conference format now reflects those discussions.

Australia believes that the chemical weapons convention will be a better convention and will operate more effectively as a result of the contribution which industry can make to the convention. We are conscious that the role of industry is and must remain one of providing advice to governments, which obviously retain the responsibility for concluding international agreements.

Australia looks forward to the constructive participation in its conference of the many countries which have accepted our invitation to attend.