Fifteenth special session
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda items 10 and 12

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT
ITS TENTH AND TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSIONS

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS, INCLUDING QUALITATIVE AND
QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS, RELEVANT TO THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS, WITH
A VIEW TO THE ELABORATION OF APPROPRIATE CONCRETE AND PRACTICAL
MEASURES AND, IF NECESSARY, ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, TAKING DULY
INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE
FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY, THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

The prohibition of chemical weapons

Working paper submitted by Argentina

1. In recent years the use of chemical weapons, confirmed by successive reports
of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, has shown - as if it were
necessary - how urgent it is to eliminate these weapons of mass destruction once
and for all.

2. The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the
first special session devoted to disarmament, acknowledges that the complete
and effective prohibition of all chemical weapons and their destruction represent one
of the most urgent measures of disarmament. Since the second special session of
the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, noteworthy progress has been made with
this topic. In 1984 the Committee on Disarmament started multilateral
negotiations, and now the draft convention is at an advanced stage of preparation.

3. The multilateral negotiations have reached a decisive stage. Since it is
aware of this, the Argentine Republic, which, as indicated by the President of
Argentina, Dr. Raúl Alfonsín, in his address to the General Assembly, does not possess chemical-weapon arsenals, has stepped up its efforts in support of the conclusion of a convention prohibiting all chemical weapons and installations for their production as soon as possible. All States must contribute - in one way or another - to the achievement of that common goal, which is set forth in paragraph 75 of the Final Document.

4. The future convention will be non-discriminatory from the political and military points of view, since all States parties will be on an equal footing once the process of destroying all chemical weapons and existing production installations has been completed. Thus, all States parties will have the same rights and duties and one set of machinery for verifying their implementation, the purpose of which will be to confirm that the weapons in question are not being produced.

5. During the period of destruction, the future convention must distinguish between States that possess chemical weapons and States that do not possess them. Accordingly, the legitimate defence interests of countries that do not possess chemical weapons must be safeguarded by means of strict observance of the principle of the undiminished security of States parties during the period of destruction. That principle, which is recognized in paragraph 29 of the Final Document, must also be observed once that period has been completed, so that States parties are not in a disadvantageous situation where security is concerned vis-à-vis States that are not parties to the convention.

6. The future convention must also be non-discriminatory from the economic and technological points of view and not give rise, as a result of its implementation, to obstacles to or restrictions on either the development and the application of chemistry for peaceful purposes or international co-operation in the field in question.

7. Consequently, the goals of the convention should be:

(a) The complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and installations for their production and their destruction;

(b) The undiminished security of all States parties; and

(c) To avoid obstacles to or restrictions on the economic and technological development of States and international co-operation in the peaceful uses of chemistry.

8. Verification of compliance is an essential aspect of the future convention for which there will no precedent among the multilateral disarmament treaties, and it will therefore expose to the scrutiny of an international organization set up by the convention itself areas that have heretofore been jealously guarded by States. The convention on chemical weapons will thus contribute to the strengthening of confidence among States.
9. Moreover, the negotiations on chemical weapons demonstrate the appropriateness of the Conference on Disarmament for the drafting of a convention of such great complexity. It may be said, on the basis of this experience, that the effectiveness of the only multilateral body for disarmament negotiations is in direct proportion to the political will to make progress on a topic.

10. The convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons is within the reach of an organized international community. However, the efforts made over many years could be wasted if a convergence of the political will required for the conclusion of the convention cannot be brought about. The opportunity is there. It is for all parties concerned to ensure that this opportunity is not missed.

11. "After its conclusion, all States should contribute to ensuring the broadest possible application of the convention through its early signature and ratification", states the last sentence of paragraph 75 of the Final Document. In order to ensure that mistrust does not delay implementation of the convention, the States of given regions or subregions should take concerted action with respect to their accession to the convention. More rapid progress would thus be made towards the goal of universal accession, which will be the ultimate guarantee that chemical weapons have been definitively eliminated.