

(Mr. Teja, India)

My delegation is pleased to note the high priority attached to item 4 -- Chemical Weapons -- by the members of the Conference, especially the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Encouraging trends were noticed during 1986 and a fair amount of progress was achieved in refining the language of the draft convention. For this, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, and also the Chairmen of three Working Groups. We share the optimism expressed by some delegates about the possible conclusion of the Convention by the end of 1987 and are prepared to co-operate fully with the new Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, the distinguished representative of Sweden, to achieve this goal.

It is already possible to visualize the final form of the CW Convention and it would be no exaggeration to state that it will be the most complex disarmament instrument that we have negotiated to date. Presently, the negotiations are at a delicate stage. It is therefore necessary that we organize our work in a manner that would enable us to deal most effectively with the pending issues. I would suggest that we occupy ourselves with the issues of principles while leaving the experts to iron out the technical and procedural questions. In this connection our delegation has attempted in the following paragraphs to indicate some of the priorities.

The definition of a chemical weapon is a fundamental issue and a complicated one. The present definition based on toxicity has helped the Ad Hoc Committee in its deliberations but it is now widely felt, especially taking into account the consideration of non-prohibited activities, that this definition needs to be refined by incorporating other elements based on characteristics of chemical weapons and, therefore, the danger that they might pose to the Convention. Another area which is related to this issue is the classification of chemical products into different categories and the rationale for doing so. In this exercise, our delegation feels, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Convention is aimed at banning chemical weapons and not inhibiting the growth of chemical industry for peaceful purposes. Accordingly, the importance of Article XI of the Convention cannot be overlooked. It is our strong conviction that provisions for implementing international co-operation for economic and technological development of peaceful chemical industry will only serve to strengthen the Convention and its fundamental objectives.

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The issues relating to organizational aspects and the structure of the authority which will be responsible for the implementation of this Convention also deserve urgent and thorough consideration. Given the unique nature of this instrument, it is necessary to design new solutions to meet the requirements of the Convention.

Finally, while still on chemical weapons, another significant aspect is that of the challenge inspection régime. It is heartening to note that there is now a convergence on the basic concepts underlying this measure and we hope that it will soon be possible to convert it into an agreement on the details of this exercise. An early resolution of this issue will go a long way in strengthening our determination to conclude the Convention by the end of 1987.