

(Mr. Morel, France)

The third and last phase deals with the report of the inspectors, and more generally speaking the outcome of talks between the requesting State and the requested State. In every case the report of the inspectors will be passed to the Executive Council, which will have the task of evaluating its findings. We believe that at this stage it is too early to spell out how the Executive Council may act. This being the case, any intervention in the procedure by the institutional bodies set up under the Convention should occur at this stage and not before.

But it must be quite clear that whatever the final outcome of the report and the contacts between the requesting and requested countries, it remains the duty of the latter to respect the Convention strictly.

I have indicated the major importance that my delegation attaches to the question of security stocks, and I would like to make one or two remarks on this topic. Generally speaking we start from the idea that the destruction of existing stocks and production facilities is a lengthy undertaking, one that is technically complex and financially costly. It has been agreed during the course of negotiations that this would be spread over a period of 10 years. This period would be in fact the first phase in the implementation of the Convention. Its proper functioning would be a pre-condition for the next phase: it is clear that the definitive régime of the Convention -- that is to say the total elimination of stocks and their non-reconstitution -- would enter into effect in the second phase only if the first phase had been completed satisfactorily.

The purpose of this 10-year first phase is to bring the effective chemical weapon capacities of all States to the attention of parties to the Convention and allow the verification of the data supplied; to define ways and means and phases for reducing the levels of chemical weapons over the 10-year period; and to test the effectiveness and compliance with the Convention of the concrete proposals actually implemented by the States over this period so as to move progressively towards the objective set for the end of the 10-year period -- the complete elimination of stocks and production facilities.

Since it goes without saying that this Convention will not encroach in any way on the rights and obligations of each State party to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 under that Protocol, the use of chemical weapons will obviously remain prohibited during the 10-year period under the conditions stipulated in international law. Nevertheless, this period will give rise to a new situation from the point of view of the security of the States parties, one which must be considered with the greatest care.

It is important to guarantee not only the future security of signatories once stocks have been totally eliminated, but also their immediate security during the 10-year period. However, the issue of maintaining security during this period has not yet been the subject of the detailed debate which is necessary in order that consensus should be established in this area.