

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1130
CD/CW/WP.387
20 February 1992

ENGLISH
Original: CHINESE

CHINA

Principled Position and Proposals on the Issue of Abandoned Chemical Weapons

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1. The objective of the future convention is the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all types of chemical weapons and the realization of a chemical-weapon-free world. As the issue of the chemical weapons abandoned in a victim State by another State is of direct relevance to this objective, a just solution will have to be found within the framework of the convention and form an essential part of it. An important consensus to this effect has already been reached in the Conference and its Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and is clearly reflected in the rolling texts of 1990 and 1991.
2. The necessity and relevance of arriving at a solution is self-evident. The act of using and abandoning chemical weapons by a State on the territory of another State is certainly not a mere "historical problem" that concerns only the States directly involved; it is of relevance to the entire international community. Furthermore, the possibility that such acts might be committed again cannot be excluded before the chemical-weapon-free world becomes a reality. The issue of abandoned chemical weapons is, therefore, an important one that has a bearing on the rights and obligations of each and every State party to the convention.
3. The issue of abandoned chemical weapons, being inherently related to definitions of chemical weapons as well as provisions on their use, declaration, destruction, verification, sanctions and cooperation, should be dealt with in a balanced, reasonable and integrated way, and the resulting provisions should become an integral part of the convention. Only then can the convention become truly comprehensive, effective and universal.
4. As an international legal document of unlimited duration, the convention must contain equitable provisions on abandoned chemical weapons, clearly setting forth the rights and obligations of States parties, including the principle that the State which used and abandoned chemical weapons shall bear the responsibility for undoing the consequences of such uses and for