

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

It also wishes to thank the chairmen of the working groups, Mr. Akkerman, Mr. Duarte and Mr. Thielicke, for the remarkable work they did. We appreciate the efforts made in the working groups to reduce the substantive problems and Ambassador Ekéus' part in formulating certain provisions -- a difficult drafting exercise that the Chairman of the Committee more often than not undertook personally.

However, if we weigh the efforts against the results, we must acknowledge that they are not equally balanced. Although the report records some progress, particularly on stocks and destruction operations, annex I, which sets out the positions, is still studded with square brackets bearing witness to the continued existence of divergent views. But the report reflects only a part of the truth; it leaves aside what is undoubtedly its most important aspect.

On various delicate points, which had hardly been tackled previously, such as production facilities, their status and monitoring, exploratory discussions have taken place which should bear fruit at the next session. Similarly, as regards the institutions without which the Convention could not function, the problems have been better defined, the possibilities of agreement better identified and outline solutions sketched out. Those invisible steps, which no report can reflect, should not be underestimated in negotiations as arduous as ours in which progress is perforce slow.

Lastly, there has perhaps been evidence in various statements of an increased awareness of the problems to be solved. My delegation has been impressed by the appeals which have been made for more realism and less legal perfectionism; we also think, like others, that not all the risks can be eliminated and that the convention cannot provide for every eventuality in the same minute detail.

However, we do consider that certain aspects should be covered by provisions formulated with particular care; the products and the production facilities, whether prohibited or permitted, must be classified with exactitude so that the monitoring procedures best suited to each case may also be fully and precisely stipulated; in addition, the institutional structures will have to be simplified. To achieve that most effectively, it will no doubt be necessary to ensure that those bodies have by their very composition the appropriate permanent assistance in the technological field; finally, with regard to the methods of taking decisions, the respective advantages of the various possible procedures, namely consensus, vote by a qualified majority and in some expressly stipulated cases, automatic decisions, must be carefully weighed up according to the circumstances.

The French delegation proposes to submit at the beginning of the next session a number of technical documents in the hope of promoting progress on certain particularly controversial issues. It is gratified that there will be a little more time for negotiations both at the beginning of the year and during the autumn of 1985. While we have no illusions in that respect, we can, I think, hope that on some problems, such as that of stocks, we may reach an agreement which can be translated into articles of the Convention and that, perhaps, on the particularly thorny questions of production, we may make a significant breakthrough.