

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

We are not unmindful of the outstanding issues, some of them of considerable complexity, which have yet to be resolved. Foremost among them are the questions of challenge inspection and of non-production of chemical weapons in civil industry. At the heart of both these issues lies the same consideration, that of effective verification. There has been no dearth of proposals on the question of challenge inspection. My delegation too submitted one such proposal last year in an attempt to bridge the differences which have prevented an agreement so far. We have been heartened by indications of a gradual convergence of views during the spring part of the session. It is evident, however, that considerable work remains to be done before this convergence is translated into treaty language. The issue of challenge inspection raises two considerations: one the one hand, the need for a stringent verification régime which would make it extremely difficult for any violation of the convention to go undetected, and on the other hand, the right of a State to protect installations of a highly sensitive nature having relevance to its supreme security interests from unreasonable and unjustified scrutiny. In our view, these two considerations are not irreconcilable, and we are confident that it would be possible to work out a mechanism which takes due account of both. One way of doing so would be to entrust the Executive Council with decision-making authority in disputed cases under an appropriate voting mechanism which guarantees that such differences are settled with all possible dispatch.

In the context of challenge inspection, some concern has been expressed about the possibility of what are described as "frivolous" challenges. My delegation feels that these fears are largely exaggerated. We do not subscribe to the view that some States or their leaders act responsibly while others do not. In any event, more harm would be done by placing undue impediments on the right of a State to request inspection than would result from a resort to "frivolous" challenge.

My delegation has consistently taken the view that declarations regarding chemical weapon stockpiles and production facilities should be made at the earliest possible stage, and should be comprehensive and detailed in order to be fully verifiable. We therefore welcome the flexibility shown by the Soviet delegation earlier during this session on the question of the declaration of locations of chemical weapon stocks and their verification. We hope that the Ad hoc Committee will soon be able to finalize the relevant provisions of article IV of the convention.

Despite encouraging progress in several areas, a number of important questions remain open besides those I have already mentioned, including questions relating to scope, the definition of chemical weapons, the definition of production facilities and measures to be taken for their elimination, and organizational questions. Nor should we forget articles X and XI dealing retrospectively with assistance and with economic and technological development. The importance of the final clauses (articles XII to XVI) should also not be underestimated. Articles X and XI are of great interest to the developing countries, and we are happy to note that the programme of work of the Ad hoc Committee envisages their being taken up during the current session. My delegation has submitted a proposal on the question of assistance which we hope will receive consideration when work on article X commences.