

(Mr. Luce, United Kingdom)

us therefore make an urgent and concerted effort now to conclude such a ban. Chemical weapons threaten us all. All of us should therefore show a common resolve to take the necessary steps swiftly to crown these negotiations with success. Let history record that this Conference — these 40 nations — bear the credit for banishing chemical weapons from the face of the Earth.

A lot of work remains to be done especially in the vital field of the verification needed to provide assurance to each Party that others are complying fully with the Convention. My Government believes that confidence in the Convention as a whole needs to be sustained by a confirmation of several mutually reinforcing systems of verification. The task is a daunting one but I believe that solutions can and will be found. I welcome the broad agreement already reached on several aspects. First, it is common ground that assurance of compliance must in the last resort be provided by a system of fact-finding, including on-site inspection on request. Last year I tabled a paper, CD/431, on this issue of verification by challenge.

However, it is also accepted that this form of challenge inspection should be only a safety net. It could not, and should not act as the main system of verification. The vast majority of inspections — indeed, we must hope the totality of inspections — should be carried out by routine and regular means. There is, I believe, a consensus in this Conference on the relationship between routine and challenge inspection which I have outlined. This systematic routine supervision, including continuous on-site inspection, must cover the destruction of stockpiles and dismantling of chemical weapons factories.

Thirdly, it is agreed that as another element of routine verification there must be a permanent system of routine inspection of those sectors of the chemical industry making substances which might be diverted from civil use to the illicit manufacture of chemical weapons. My predecessor, Mr. Douglas Hurd, tabled detailed proposals on this non-production aspect in March 1983 in document CD/353. That paper asked other delegations to provide data on the production in their countries of certain chemicals known as "key precursors", compounds that can be used to make chemical weapons. We are grateful to those delegations who have responded to our request. I hope other delegations will soon follow their example, in order to enable informed negotiation on this aspect of the Convention. In the light of the information provided, the United Kingdom delegation presented a further paper on 10 July 1984 (CD/514) which classified chemical warfare agents and their precursors according to the perceived risk that they would pose to the Convention.

On each issue, proposals from different quarters are on the table. At this point, I must express my disappointment that the draft Convention (CD/500) tabled last April by the Vice-President of the United States has not given a greater impetus to the negotiations. This comprehensive piece of work provides an admirable basis for negotiation, and the Conference has not yet done it justice. Some delegations have criticised it, and particularly aspects of its verification provisions. But those delegations have not come forward with serious alternatives of their own. All agree on the need for a high degree of assurance that parties are complying with their obligations. There is now another need: for concentrated and detailed application. There will be no lack of effort on the part of my Government.