

(Mr. Dubey, India)

chemical weapons. This has no doubt greatly improved the prospects for work next year. For this the credit, in no small measure, should go to the distinguished Ambassador of Canada, who, as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group, has indeed made an untiring effort to fulfil the pledge he gave at the beginning to "take these negotiations forward during 1983". Valuable contributions have also been made to the work on the subject by the delegations of the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, the United States, Yugoslavia, China, France and the USSR.

At the same time, quite a few problems of a complex and sensitive nature remain to be sorted out. Many of these problems are rooted in the very nature of the technology in the chemical industry as well as the dual purpose -- both military and development -- of the end-use of the products of this industry. In the opinion of my delegation, while continuing to deal with these problems through various contact groups that have been set up for this purpose, it is not too soon to bring together in the form of provisions of a draft convention those elements on which there is already a consensus or near-consensus, as also those on which differences still persist. This will lend greater clarity to subsequent discussions, will enable delegations to see the main provisions of a draft convention in their mutual relationship and bring into relief points on which instructions have to be sought from their governments.

It will be recalled that India has so far not been in favour of including the prohibition of use in a new convention on chemical weapons. This was so because we considered the Geneva Protocol of 1925 to be adequate for prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. As this Protocol constituted a universal legal prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, recognized both in international and customary law, we had apprehensions that the duplication of its provision in another instrument might undermine its legal force and status. My Government has, however, reviewed its position, and I am now glad to inform the Committee that India will be willing to support the incorporation in the proposed convention of a suitable provision for a ban on the use of chemical weapons. We have done so primarily as a contribution to speeding up the work towards negotiating a convention banning chemical weapons. Having said this, I would like to emphasize that the incorporation of a provision on the banning of use in the proposed convention should be done in such a manner as to ensure that the convention supplements and strengthens the prohibition already provided for in the 1925 Geneva Protocol. I am sure that in this connection some of the genuine concerns regarding the status of the 1925 Protocol voiced by distinguished delegates will be taken into account. We are happy to note that the tentative draft prepared by the co-ordinator of the contact group dealing with the subject duly reflects the sensitivities and concerns in this regard.

The importance of the question of verification of compliance cannot be over-emphasized. This question has, therefore, very rightly claimed a large part of the time and attention of the Ad Hoc Working Group. I would not like, on this occasion, to go into the details of the proposals made in this regard. I would simply reiterate my delegation's position that one of the most important considerations to be taken into account in reaching agreement on the verification of compliance should be that the chemical industry in many countries of the third world, including my own, still remains at an early stage of development and nothing should be done in the proposed convention which will inhibit the growth of the civilian chemical industries in these countries. The legitimate desire of these countries to develop their chemical industries for the benefit of their peoples and as a contribution to bridging the technological gap and