

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The prohibition of chemical weapons has for a long time received particular attention in Finnish disarmament policy. In our view the Conference should concentrate on negotiating a comprehensive convention concerning chemical weapons in order to reach as soon as possible a total elimination of the possibility of chemical warfare.

We welcome the fact that the urgency and importance of determined efforts and concrete negotiation in the field have been recently underlined, notably by the USSR in its proposal regarding a regional European approach to chemical weapons prohibition and by the United States in its announcement of comprehensive proposal to be submitted to this body. I should also like to express the appreciation of my country to the United States for the organization of the Tooele verification workshop in Utah, in 1983, which provided the participants, including some Finnish experts, with important knowledge concerning the problems of destruction of chemical weapons.

Problems relating to verification continue to delay the progress towards the conclusion of a comprehensive chemical weapons treaty. There seems to be a general agreement on the need to verify the compliance of the parties to the treaty in all phases of its operation. Differences of view, however, continue to persist regarding the mode of functioning of verification and reporting as well as fact-finding procedures. In this connection I wish to emphasize that the progress made in recent years in instrumental verification technology has been remarkable. The durability, accuracy and reliability of automatic monitoring instruments are expected to improve considerably in the near future. Their extensive use in the verification of a chemical weapons treaty might prove possible. It is our impression that the difficult question of verification could be approached by making full use of the possibilities of modern existing and developing instrumental verification technology on the one hand and on-site inspection on the other hand, which would primarily be needed in order to secure the proper functioning of the verification equipment.

The long-standing project of Finland on chemical weapon verification is an attempt to contribute to the solution of verification problems in the area of chemical weapons. The objective is to produce scientific knowledge of methods by which their possible use can be detected, the discontinuance of their production surveyed and their destruction verified.

The results of the project are freely available to the international community. We hope that they will prove especially useful when the Conference on Disarmament comes to an understanding about the procedures for verification of the chemical weapons treaty.