

(Mr. Tellalov, Bulgaria)

Comrade President, the Bulgarian delegation also wishes to take up briefly item 4, "Chemical weapons".

The negotiations on a total and comprehensive chemical-weapons ban, which have been going on for several years now, have entered a decisive stage. On the basis of a multitude of proposals, our common efforts have led to the drafting of provisions or the outlining of possible solutions on practically all issues within the scope of the draft convention. In this respect my delegation is pleased to note the purpose-oriented and, on the whole, efficient work of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons throughout this spring session.

This is to be credited, in particular, to those delegations which tabled new constructive proposals and contributed to arriving at mutually acceptable compromises in key sectors of our common endeavour. My delegation wishes to join those delegations which have already noted the significant contribution of the Soviet delegation, namely its proposals of 17 February and 5 March 1987.

We welcome the patience and skill with which Ambassador Ekéus is pursuing his task as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We also appreciate the contributions of the three cluster co-ordinators.

The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria attaches major importance to negotiating a chemical-weapons ban. May I recall that my country is not developing chemical weapons, does not manufacture such weapons and has none stationed on its territory. As is well known, the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is doing its best to transform the Balkans into a zone free of chemical weapons. This is an initiative promoted jointly with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania. It is perceived as a partial measure aimed at furthering efforts towards a global solution to the chemical-weapons ban issue.

I would like to inform this body that on 30 December 1986, the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria adopted a decree setting out restrictions on the export of chemicals which are produced in large commercial quantities and which could be used for chemical weapons purposes. This measure is in keeping with the need to secure the functioning of the régime of non-production of chemical weapons in the future convention.

We welcome the statement of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev that the USSR has ceased production of chemical weapons. Now that the two militarily most powerful States are not producing chemical weapons, conditions are most favourable for the speedy elaboration of an international convention on a total and comprehensive chemical-weapons ban. My delegation neither underestimates nor overestimates the problems that remain to be resolved. It seems to us, however, that all necessary prerequisites are at hand for achieving compromise solutions to the outstanding issues. Thus, the elaboration of the convention is within our reach. If political realism and a sense of responsibility prevail, the year 1987 may enter into history as the beginning of general and complete chemical disarmament.