

(Mr. Clerckx, Belgium)

In the field of the verification of non-production of chemical weapons, article 6, we have managed to lay the foundations of three verification régimes with lists of products whose production, processing and international trade would be subject to international verification. These are either well-known chemical warfare agents, such as choking agents, blister agents, blood agents, incapacitants or nerve gases, or their key precursors. Some of these products have peaceful applications and are produced by industry for that purpose. We have started to recognize the legitimacy of peaceful industrial activities relating to those chemical products which have a dual purpose and which in some countries are or have been used for armaments purposes. We are especially pleased at this shift towards what we feel to be common sense, which was indeed something whose slow pace was a source of concern to us.

My delegation has very frequently repeated here that total, permanent and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons is one of the main priorities for Belgium in the field of disarmament. His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran has again this morning illustrated the acute, urgent human, moral and political necessity of this by referring to facts which we cannot but condemn categorically.

Belgium would like to see the convention concluded without delay. My country will spare no effort to achieve this, and is happy that its representatives currently have the opportunity of making a specific contribution to this goal, by chairing the working group dealing with chemical disarmament proper, i.e. the elimination of chemical weapons and their production facilities, whose work seems to be promising.

It is our belief that if the Conference manages to maintain the present transparency of the negotiations, the conclusion of a chemical disarmament convention is something we can achieve much sooner than might have been thought.

The realism which is so beneficial in the negotiations on chemical weapons has not been lacking in the Conference in the second area of its concerns, outer space.