

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, the elimination of chemical weapons from the face of the Earth is a lofty goal which nobody more than the Iranian people is committed to. As the latest and hopefully the last victims of these weapons of horror, we attach the utmost significance to the conclusion of a treaty which is strong, verifiable, effective, solid and foolproof. We have always been, and remain, faithful proponents of such a convention. Any view by my delegation should be evaluated in this context. We wholeheartedly support the conclusion of such a convention which is backed not only by words but also by the sincere conviction for its universal adherence following its signature. It has always been our consistent determination to be an original signatory to such a convention, a convention not only agreed to but enthusiastically embraced by all States of the world, thus giving a true meaning to its fundamental objective of universality.

My delegation has worked very hard along with other delegations to arrive at such a convention. This has, however, not been possible to the full extent. These shortcomings will affect the future implementation of the convention and efforts therefore should be rendered to rectify them although much will also depend on the resolve and intention of the States parties to carry out their obligations in keeping with the spirit of the convention.

The definition of chemical weapons is the most fundamental part of the convention, as the whole body of the convention is built about, around and upon this definition. As far as toxic chemicals and their precursors are concerned, they have been elaborated and described throughout the text and a system of verification has been envisaged to check any chemicals being used as weapons. Munitions, submunitions, devices and equipment which have been tagged as chemical weapons could have been clarified further. The interpretative statement by Ambassador von Wagner, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, is very helpful in this regard since it has not been objected to by any delegation. However, further work is warranted to further clarify the definition in order to prevent any misgivings in its interpretation at the time of implementation of the convention.

On the question of riot control agents, my delegation totally rejects the notion of their use in extraterritorial operation. These agents are purely for domestic riot control and the convention is in no way legitimizing their use outside national boundaries.

Article X is far from being complete. There are no balanced obligations in comparison with, for example, article VI to provide assistance in cases of use of chemical weapons. There is no guarantee that the voluntary fund will be sufficiently fed by States parties. The operation of article X will be left to the good will and intentions of the States parties.

Article XI has not given sufficient assurances to balance the restrictions which will come about as the result of verification measures. There are no commitments under article XI to assure that the fragile chemical industries of the developing countries will not be adversely affected by the convention.