

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

Turning to chemical weapons, it is only appropriate that I dwell for a few moments on that subject, since this is the period set aside in the first part of the 1985 session specifically for discussion in plenary of this issue.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons has done intensive work during the 1984 session under the very able chairmanship of Ambassador Rolf Ekéus and has not only clarified many points but focused attention on the basic framework of a future agreement, and I would like to express my personal gratitude to him, as well as that of my Government.

Ambassador Turbanski is already showing our wisdom in selecting him as successor to Ambassador Ekéus. He has lost no time in setting the course of the chemical weapons negotiations for the 1985 session. As a result, I would hope that, by making full use of our time, we might at least come close to completing our work during the 1985 session. It is a pretty tall order, I realize. Work in the three working groups is, however, progressing rather slowly, and there seems to be a worrisome tendency, which I do not level at any one group or any one delegation, to utilize the time in restating old positions and covering old ground. What we think that we must strive to do is to pinpoint those issues on which we agree and then work on those key issues which remain to be resolved, rather than continue to devote attention to somewhat less important issues in ever greater detail. We must in other words avoid creating inflexibility by our own working methods.

Clearly, we are at a stage in the negotiations where we must address certain critical issues related to verification. To delegations opposed to a discussion of the conceptual aspects of verification in isolation from concrete issues, let me say that we see too little indication of much willingness to come to grips by one means or another with the essential requirement of verification. For example, agreement must be found on procedures for the inspection of stockpile and production sites upon declaration at entry into force of the convention, which implies agreement on the principle of such inspection. How else can we be assured that the production sites are sealed and no longer active until they are destroyed? While the concept of continuous inspection during the destruction of existing chemical weapons has been generally accepted, similar agreement has eluded us on monitoring the destruction of the means of production. The issue of challenge verification must be addressed objectively, and I have listened with great interest to the important statement just delivered by the distinguished representative of the USSR which touched on that very issue. I think that what are needed are proposals, and we know that the United States delegation has taken the initiative in putting forward proposals outlining its views in detail on these issues. Without directing criticism at other delegations, we do