

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

I have already reviewed the substantive discussion that has taken place this year on the first and last of these elements, i.e. the verification of destruction of stocks and the verification of non-production of chemical weapons; but we have not reached any conclusions and a great deal more needs to be done. We have not yet seriously tackled either of the other two elements. Obviously, if the Convention is to permit the production and retention of small quantities of super-toxic substances for protective purposes, this will have to be subject to stringent international control to ensure that this exception is not abused. Perhaps even more important to confidence in the Convention will be the provision of adequate assurances that the existing facilities for the production of chemical weapons, and the super-toxic compounds that go into them, have been definitively eliminated and cannot be used secretly to replenish stocks that have been ostentatiously destroyed. These four elements, along with the element of verification by challenge, will ultimately need to be considered together, because they will, together, be needed to build up and sustain the required level of confidence in the convention that we are negotiating. As confidence is indivisible, so we must look very carefully at the verification regime as a whole. My delegation hopes that this will be the priority task of the Chemical Weapons Working Group at the beginning of our next session. My delegation will give careful thought to these problems during the recess, and we hope that all other interested delegations will come back in February with comprehensive instructions to enable us to make rapid progress in this area, which will be of decisive importance to the success of our joint endeavours.