

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

The provisions which have been developed so far represent, in our view, a sensible approach, envisaging as they do specific levels and schemes of monitoring for different categories of schedules of chemicals, depending on the risk they are considered to pose to the aims of the convention. A lot of work has already been done in this area. The "rolling text" indicates, however, that a number of questions remain to be resolved. In the last couple of years, successive chairmen have initiated discussions with representatives of industry, to help them understand what the negotiations are seeking to achieve and to allow them to express their views and concerns to the negotiators. These consultations have been valuable initiatives, and Australia welcomes a similar exchange which is to take place under Ambassador Morel later this month.

But there will need to be further work done to achieve a universal understanding within the chemical industry of the implications of a chemical weapons convention, and the ways in which the industry can contribute to the elaboration of provisions which will be both practical and effective. In Australia's case, we have developed a very productive dialogue with our chemical industry on chemical weapons issues, encompassing the CW convention negotiations, over a number of years. Our industry has stated publicly its commitment to a CW convention and its total opposition to chemical weapons. Such a dialogue between governments and their chemical industries can be of enormous benefit for the convention from two perspectives: in resolving outstanding questions and thereby facilitating the early conclusion of the convention, and in ensuring that the convention is implemented effectively, both for government and industry. Through this dialogue, industry will be able to develop its understanding of its role and responsibilities in international endeavours to eradicate chemical weapons, in particular the contribution it can make to a global, comprehensive ban on those weapons.

There is a need as we see it for this dialogue to be intensified, developed and extended to all relevant countries. It is for this reason that on 7 March I announced that Australia would host a Government-Industry Conference Against Chemical Weapons. The Conference will be held this year, from 18 to 22 September, in our national capital Canberra. The Conference will bring together governments and representatives of chemical industries world-wide, with the aim of raising their awareness about the problems of chemical weapons, and considering ways in which they can work together, in partnership, both internationally and domestically, in support of a comprehensive convention.

Australia has invited to the Conference all member countries of the CD, as you are aware, other countries with significant chemical industries and those countries with a particular interest in chemical weapons issues. Such participation will encourage the universal support which the convention must secure and which Australia is intent upon generating. It will be a joint effort designed to give, and which we believe will give, impetus to the negotiations here in Geneva. To facilitate the full and effective implementation of a convention, industry must appreciate its role in addressing the problem. Verification procedures under the convention will require the co-operation of industry to achieve full effect. The time to take this step is now, so that effective consultation begins while the convention is being negotiated. Let there be no misunderstanding as to what Australia