

chemicals and sets an appropriate level of verification for each category. This ensures sufficiently broad coverage of facilities capable of producing chemical weapons.

But care was taken not to burden the world chemical industry with unnecessarily intrusive or bureaucratic inspections.

(B) The draft establishes a proper balance between the rights and the obligations of all States parties.

Because of the size of their chemical industries, the most highly industrialized countries will bear most of the burden of verification of industry. However, thanks to the concept of "capable facilities", all States parties with a chemical industry of any size will be subject to verification at the appropriate time.

Similarly, it is natural that countries which accept the constraints of verification and comply with all their commitments should enjoy the prospect of a relaxation of the measures taken by other States parties to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons. This was recognized by the members of the "Australia Group" in the statement recently made in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1164).

The membership of the executive council is so designed as to ensure equitable representation of the different regions of the world. When the number of seats for each region was set, due account was taken of the relative size of the chemical industry in each State party. This industrial criterion has been expressed in a sufficiently flexible manner to allow the regional adjustments required and the later modifications which will be inevitable.

The draft convention places an obligation on all States parties possessing chemical weapons or chemical weapons production facilities to destroy all of them within 10 years after the convention enters into force. At the same time, the draft takes account of the technological or financial difficulties that some States parties might encounter in destroying their CW stockpiles. The draft makes it possible, in exceptional circumstances, to modify or extend the 10-year destruction period applicable to a State party, subject to stricter terms of verification by the international community. The same applies in exceptional cases to the conversion of CW production facilities to non-military uses.

II - France subscribes to the view expressed by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons that it is not realistically possible to produce a better text through further negotiations. It strongly agrees that failure to agree on this draft now would have adverse consequences for the international community as a whole.

The effect of such a situation would be to facilitate existing clandestine CW development programmes and encourage the further spread of such weapons. This would affect the security of all States, especially the least developed States, and the likely consequence would be an increased risk that chemical weapons would again be used.