

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

past. Nobody can exclude that in the relatively near future some military use might be found for today's purely commercial chemicals and vice versa. For instance, single-purpose precursors, like QL or DF, have no commercial use today. But with the rapid development of science and technology no one can give us a guarantee that in the future some commercial use will not be found even for these substances. If that happens, these substances might spread quickly throughout civilian chemical industry. If the CW ban has not been achieved by that time, it would become then substantially more difficult to negotiate it and ensure compliance with it. Thus, a rather peculiar situation emerges -- in the absence of the CW ban, the natural development of chemical science and technology, which no one can stop, might objectively hamper prospects for the cessation of the chemical-arms race. On the contrary, early achievement of the ban and full compliance with it can give us a sufficient guarantee that future development in the field of chemistry will remain peaceful, with more favourable conditions for fruitful international co-operation.

We appreciate the fact that the Conference is paying due attention to the elaboration of the CW ban. Its relevant Ad Hoc Committee is by far the most active working body of the Conference with a unique negotiating mandate. Delegations are prepared to work actively not only during the Conference session itself but also in the intersessional period. Serious interest in chemical disarmament is also demonstrated by such actions as the recent Workshop on the verification of non-production of CW organized by the Netherlands, for which we would like to thank the Dutch delegation.

We maintain that each and every delegation should contribute towards the achievement of the CW ban. This is not a problem for only the handful of countries that possess the largest chemical capabilities. The need to provide for world-wide compliance with the ban, and its possible impacts on the civilian chemical industry and international trade in the field, require that countries take an active part in the formulation of the convention's basic provisions. It would not be a wise choice to wait until the convention is ready and then only try to fit it to a State's own interests.

Judging by some political decisions, like the one I mentioned in the beginning of my statement, it seems that for the time being in some NATO countries there are two opposite tendencies -- one supporting the prohibition of CW while the other favours the massive production and deployment of new CW. But these two tendencies cannot go on side by side for a long time. We are now at a point in time when extremely important decisions will have to be made. If the second option prevails and new CW production programmes are launched, negotiations on a CW ban will be seriously hampered and the tasks to be solved will become incomparably more difficult.