

(Mr. Summerhayes, United Kingdom)

we intend shortly to put forward some detailed suggestions on the question of verification. The United Kingdom's views on this subject are already well-known. While the various elements of a convention are clearly bound up with each other, the purpose of the working paper, which, while focusing on verification, will be to build on the progress made on this issue since the United Kingdom tabled its views in 1976. Verification is still the central problem we face in drawing up a convention. Satisfactory resolution of this problem is the only way in which the parties to a convention can have confidence in it.

The United Kingdom considers that verification provisions would be necessary for each stage of implementation -- that is, for the declaration and destruction of stockpiles and production facilities --- and thereafter to monitor the compliance of States, including the monitoring of permitted peaceful uses of chemical warfare agents and dual-purpose agents. It is essential also that the convention should have an effective complaints procedure.

We believe that the verification of implementation of the destruction of stockpiles and production facilities must be under international control. Thereafter, verification of compliance could be by a mixture of bilateral and multilateral contacts between States parties, with an international body -- the Consultative Committee, on which we have already made detailed proposals -- having ultimate responsibility.

Among the other items of business before the Committee to which we attach much importance is a subject commended to our attention by General Assembly resolutions 36/97 C and 36/99, namely, the question of further measures of arms control in outer space. My delegation hopes that this subject is to be included in the agenda of the Committee for this session and that time will be allocated in our work schedule for discussion of the technical issues which will have to be addressed in this new area of work.

The question of our work schedule to which I have just referred brings me back to the point I mentioned in connection with the comprehensive programme of disarmament. We are faced with a formidable amount of work in a relatively short period, since, for practical purposes, I believe we should finish our session by the middle of April. I believe that we must be guided by the actual possibilities for making progress on particular items and not necessarily by the theoretical allocation of priorities to certain subjects according to their over-all importance in the disarmament field. I also suggest that we might consider reverting to a practice used to good avail during our 1980 session, namely, that of holding less than the usual number of plenary meetings, at least during the latter part of the session, to allow time for extra informal meetings, sessions of the Working Groups and so on. This might be particularly useful when we begin to prepare our reports. If we are to complete the work of this session in good order, it will be necessary to make proper dispositions even at this early stage for our special report to the General Assembly.