

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Comrade Chairman, the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons occupies an important place in the attainment of the historic goal of the cessation of the arms race and the lessening of the threat of war. The Warsaw Treaty member States, in their Political Declaration adopted recently in Prague, called upon all States to give a new impetus to negotiations, including those conducted within the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, in order to speed up the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

This approach of the socialist countries to the problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons is shared also by many other members of our Committee.

As the deliberations in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons at the beginning of this year showed, the most important obstacle hindering the completion of work on the provisions relating to the scope of the future convention is the lack of agreement on whether the convention, in spite of the existence of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, should in some or other way envisage the prohibition of the use of this type of weapon of mass destruction. In our statement today we would like to dwell upon this question.

I would like to recall that various points of view have been expressed on the question of confirming the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and different ways of resolving the issue were proposed.

In particular a number of delegations, including the delegation of the Soviet Union, have expressed apprehension that the duplication in the future convention of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons established by the Geneva Protocol some 60 years ago might be to the detriment of this authoritative international treaty. In this connection the delegations deemed it necessary to display the maximum prudence and care and to try to solve this problem by stressing in the preamble of the future convention the importance of the Geneva Protocol and including in the convention an article stating that none of its provisions should be interpreted as in any way limiting or diminishing the undertakings of States under the Geneva Protocol and certain other international agreements.

On the other hand some delegations have maintained that since what we are concerned with is the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, then it would be advisable to include in the convention also a provision on the prohibition of the use of such weapons, so indicating the completeness of the scope of the prohibition.

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