

PAKISTAN

WORKING PAPERViews of the Government of Pakistan submitted in
response to the circulation of document CD/39

1. The urgency of concluding an effective ban on chemical weapons has increased in recent months in the light of persistent reports regarding the use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan and certain other regions of the world. Several statements have been made in the Committee on this subject. Pakistan initially refrained from commenting on the matter because of its desire to avoid exacerbating the already charged political atmosphere in the Committee. However, the circulation of document CD/39, transmitting a telegram from the so-called "Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs" of the present imposed regime in Kabul, and some of the statements which were made to defend this document, obliged Pakistan to express its views on the subject.
2. For some time now, persistent reports have emanated from refugees coming from Afghanistan, and some of these have appeared in the world press, about the use of chemical toxic agents against the civilian population of Afghanistan and against the Afghan nationalist resistance. It has been asserted that these reports are "fabrications", or that, at best, there is no "conclusive proof". As yet, there may be no "conclusive proof" that lethal chemical weapons have been used in Afghanistan. However, from all that is known, it appears that some kinds of chemical toxic agents have been used in Afghanistan against the civilian population and Mujahedeen alike. In this report a particularly disturbing report appeared in the French newspaper "Le Monde", of 27 March 1980.
3. Although it remains to be established that lethal chemical weapons have been used in Afghanistan, even less toxic substances, which may be non-lethal if used in certain quantities, could become lethal if utilized in concentrated forms or against people who have no protection against such chemical agents. And, as the representative of Sweden stated on 24 April 1979 in the Committee on Disarmament, "launching attacks with incapacitating agents and irritants in war is by most countries considered to be prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of 1925".
4. In this context, the assertion emanating from the Kabul regime, reflected in document CD/39, that "subversive bands" have used "lethal chemical weapons" given to them "from outside of the country", appears to be a patent concoction designed to shift attention from the particularly brutal manner in which the Afghan patriots are being suppressed. More disturbingly, this is considered by some to be an ex-post-facto attempt to justify the use of chemical weapons against the Afghan population.