

(Mr. Montassier, France)

peaceful purposes, on two conditions: that lethal supertoxic chemicals and single-purpose precursors should be destroyed and not converted, apart from those produced for permitted purposes; and that the conversion process should be subject to strict control.

The fact remains that the destruction or conversion of stocks could not take place instantaneously. It would therefore be desirable to provide for co-ordination among States which declare that they possess chemical weapons to enable them to harmonize their destruction plans. What is at stake here is something essential: nothing less than the security of each State.

Side by side with the negotiation of the Convention, and throughout the process leading to its signature and subsequent ratification, it will be necessary to ensure this co-ordination of destruction plans. This is a fundamental point: it is sometimes just as important to know how and at what pace the clauses of the convention will be implemented as to define flawless machinery.

The disappearance of stocks and production facilities is obviously the best guarantee against recourse to chemical weapons in case of conflict; in the interim, a threat will always exist, and current events demonstrate that this is not a theoretical danger. To avert this threat, which will last as long as there are chemical weapons which can be used, and which will reappear rapidly once a signatory State decides to withdraw from the Convention, protection exists in the form of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. It is therefore in no one's interest to weaken this bulwark.

Furthermore, the Geneva Protocol can itself resolve some problems which have arisen from time to time to complicate the drafting of the convention.

From this standpoint, it is quite useless to cover these various points in the convention, provided, of course, that the authority of the Geneva Protocol is expressly maintained and that it is clearly interpreted.

My delegation therefore proposes the inclusion in the convention of a clause which would provide for: "the exclusion of the use of chemical weapons in any armed conflict by the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, which are complementary to the Geneva Protocol, the prohibitions in which must be respected by all States Parties to the Convention".

We are aware that a formulation of this kind may perhaps have to be altered to take account of the legal system in some countries, but as far as substance is concerned the idea must be retained, however it is set forth, as a general formula such as we have suggested, or a more detailed clause.

Finally, I should like in a few words to comment on the institutional machinery of the future convention, in particular the Consultative Committee and the Executive Council.

In our view, every signatory State will be an ex officio member of the Consultative Committee, which must take its decisions by consensus, like the Executive Council. On the other hand, the membership of the future Executive Council seems a more difficult matter. We should not try to seek a magic formula, but rather be realistic, in order to be effective. What, then, are the ways open to us?