

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

... The only ray of hope that inspires us with some confidence for the future is the continuing movement forward in the negotiations on a chemical weapons ban. The impulse provided by the Paris Conference, although it lost some force due to the lack of readiness of some delegations to switch immediately to the new reality, in the long run had a favourable influence on the pace of our work.

The new report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is an impressive document. Justice requires us to pay tribute to Ambassador Morel (France) for his energetic efforts aimed at accelerating the pace of the negotiations, which have brought some concrete results. It can now be claimed that there are no blanks in the "rolling text" as far as the inclusion of all problems and topics is concerned. We have at our disposal a more solid textual basis.

I think it is generally recognized that there are three main problems which will determine whether we will reach the end of the road leading to the finalizing of a draft convention on a chemical weapons ban. I am speaking about the system of control and verification, the order of destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles, and the Executive Council of the future organization. That is why, I think, the consultations carried out on Ambassador Morel's initiative and dealing with the challenge inspection procedures (article IX, part II) and the composition and decision-making process of the Executive Council are a step in the right direction. The inclusion of the results of those consultations in appendix II of the "rolling text" is to be welcomed. Undoubtedly, the submission to the Conference of an agreed Soviet-American document on challenge inspection procedures would make a considerable contribution in this respect.

A number of useful and important conclusions in the field of verification were drawn from the national trial inspections. The presentation of reports on these inspections by a number of key countries belonging to all groups, and the holding of an open dialogue, contributed to the identification of a number of problems that might arise in that field. We hope that the holding of the second phase of experiments - international trial inspections - will bring us still closer to a model for international verification in the framework of the convention.

Consideration of the question of the Executive Council reveals that the three aspects of the problem - composition, terms of reference and the procedure for decision-taking - are interrelated. It is evident, for example, that the wider the terms of reference of the Council, the bigger will be the interest of the countries participating as members in it, and the greater the importance of the provisions for decision-taking. Although the document entitled "Outcome of the open-ended consultations on article IX, part 2" included in appendix II of the Committee's report outlines the political contours rather than the legal content of a possible agreement, it definitely marks an important step forward.