

The negotiation of a chemical weapons convention is of four-fold importance:

- it would represent a disarmament treaty and not merely an arms control measure;
- it would be an effective non-proliferation treaty;
- it would be a comprehensive treaty that would ban development, production, stock-piling and the transfer of chemical weapons with the provision for the destruction of stockpiles and production facilities and appropriate verification;
- a chemical weapons convention would be a law-making treaty with far-reaching legal implications.

While all CD participants recognise the urgency of concluding a treaty, there continue to be many outstanding problems and differences of opinion on such fundamental issues as the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons, the destruction of production facilities and verification provisions which have slowed considerably the negotiation of a CW convention.

Under the Canadian chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Working Group on CW in 1983, significant progress was made toward identifying and isolating those issues that could be agreed upon and that might form the basis for a CW convention. In April 1984 the United States tabled a draft text for a treaty banning chemical weapons. Canada welcomed this step. Since that time work has continued, but progress has been slow and there remain several difficult issues to be resolved.

Canada is also working to overcome the significant political and technical obstacles to a CTB, not least of which involves the verification of an eventual treaty. In this regard, Canada has lent its expertise to the Seismic Experts Group at the CD in an attempt to overcome some of the difficulties of verifying a CTB. Last year, for example, we participated in a 40-nation International Seismic Data Exchange (ISDE) designed to determine the scope and capability for seismic verification of a CTB. Canada provided 15 percent of the data collected during the exercise. This is the sort of steady background work that will form the foundation for the eventual negotiation of a CTB.

It has long been Canadian policy to prevent the weaponization of outer space and Canada has been an active supporter of all initiatives to discuss this issue, both in the multilateral U.N. context and bilaterally between the superpowers. We therefore welcomed the modest but significant progress made this spring in the CD.