

1. The Chinese delegation proposes that the scope of the future convention prohibiting chemical weapons should include the prohibition of their development, production, stockpiling, acquisitions, transfer and use. Our proposal to include use in the scope of prohibition of the future convention is based on the following considerations.

Firstly, the Committee on Disarmament is engaged in negotiations on the conclusion of a separate convention which has not been in existence, aimed at the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. It is very important that such a convention should be truly comprehensive in nature.

Secondly, the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare concluded in Geneva in 1925 only provides for the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in war, but does not provide for the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in other armed conflicts apart from wars. This no longer corresponds to the realities of the international situation.

Thirdly, with the ceaseless development and evolution of military technology and methods of warfare, there can be found many examples of international treaties regulating wars reaffirming and supplementing each other. For example, in the two Additional Protocols to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 on the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, which were elaborated in 1977, there are some articles which reaffirm the provisions of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, and others which supplement and develop the Geneva Conventions. The 1925 Geneva Protocol itself is also a reaffirmation of and complement to the 1907 Hague Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Poison and Poisoned Weapons. It can thus be seen that the strengthening of existing protocols or treaties by reaffirming and supplementing them with new international instruments is after all a normal phenomenon in the constant development of international treaties regulating wars. This has been done in the past, and will certainly be done again in the future.

In accordance with the above considerations, the inclusion of use in the scope of prohibition of the future convention prohibiting chemical weapons could only strengthen the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Such a convention will strengthen trust between countries, and we believe that more countries will accede to it as a result.

2. The Chinese delegation is of the view that in drafting a convention on the complete prohibition and total destruction of chemical weapons, it is imperative first to arrive at a clear definition of the chemical warfare agents to be prohibited. The question of definition not only concerns the scope of prohibition and the contents of the convention, but also has a bearing upon the relevant means and methods of verification.

The definition of a chemical warfare agent must be both comprehensive and accurate. Its comprehensiveness is designed to ensure that all chemical warfare agents which should be prohibited are brought within the scope of the prohibition. It should include not only supertoxic lethal agents but also incapacitating agents and irritant agents; it should include not only single-purpose chemical warfare agents but also dual-purpose chemical warfare agents and precursors which can turn into chemical warfare agents during the process of their use. The accuracy of the definition is designed to avoid erroneously including in the scope of the prohibition chemical substances which should not be prohibited, since that would adversely affect the development of the industrial and agricultural production of States and their scientific and technological progress.