

Apart from verification of the destruction of weapons and inspection of the chemical industry, the draft convention contains a combination of provisions which form a major innovation:

- It introduces the concept of challenge inspections for the first time in a treaty of global scope;
- It will be possible to carry out such inspections not only in declared facilities but also in undeclared facilities;
- These inspections will be conducted by teams of international inspectors reporting to the future organization.

This unprecedented system could well become a model for other multilateral disarmament agreements or for the strengthening of existing verification regimes.

By setting down an internationally agreed norm and providing the international community with practical means of enforcing it, the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons constitutes a major step in instituting collective action to eradicate weapons of mass destruction.

France endorses the view of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons that this draft convention establishes a proper balance between fundamental requirements:

(A) It provides a balance between the need for credible verification and the protection of national interests.

It reconciles the possibility that inspections may be carried out anywhere with the need to protect security interests:

- . by providing the organization, through on-site inspections, with practical means of revealing a breach of the convention, the draft has a real deterrent value vis-à-vis potential violators. Under the challenge inspection regime, a bilateral concern about possible non-compliance can trigger a multilateral inspection carried out by the technical secretariat and a multinational team of inspectors from the organization.
- . at the same time, the draft convention contains a series of provisions (on time-frames, access to the site, and safeguards against abuse) which allow all States to protect their sensitive facilities or information that are unrelated to chemical weapons.

The draft also takes into account the need to safeguard economic and commercial interests.

Under the draft convention, the States parties have an obligation to declare their chemical production facilities that are capable of producing chemical weapons. The draft defines various levels of risk among these