

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

discussions with industry that are needed to find optimum solutions. We therefore hope that delegations will focus their attention on these questions, so as to find adequate solutions within a reasonable time span.

Verification may prove to be the most time-consuming and most intricate problem to be solved before the convention can be drafted in its final shape. But the greatest political challenge may well be to ensure maximum participation by countries in the convention. The question is not only that those countries that at present participate in our work - the 40 member countries of the Conference and the 15 or so others that have joined us and make their contribution - should sign and ratify the convention. The question is also how to encourage other countries to take an interest in the enterprise. We think it is too early yet to foresee what procedures are most suitable to ensure that the convention becomes a truly global convention. One element could be the holding of a final conference open to all States once the details of the convention have been worked out.

At this stage we wish to limit ourselves to one observation valid for the short term. In the Netherlands' view, all countries that are interested in joining the work at present are welcome as observers. We fully understand that various countries, perhaps for practical reasons, do not have the opportunity yet to be represented in the daily affairs of the negotiations. But we do hope that representatives of those countries at least find an opportunity to get acquainted with the reports we have produced, and, if they so wish, put questions on an informal and individual basis to those of us here who are more closely associated with the work. This could be of use to us, and it may eventually also facilitate the ratification process once the convention is established.