

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiasco, Italy)

The present situation in fact is one of real discrimination. Theoretically, today we have reached the high point of discrimination. Italy does not possess chemical weapons and does not know how many other countries, aside from the United States and the Soviet Union, have such weapons at present. The convention represents the only means of achieving a progressive reduction of the anomalies until they are eliminated. Hence what is discriminatory, as we see it, is not the convention but rather its absence. For this reason Italy, which rejects this horrible category of weapons at the conceptual and at the political level, also feels the need for the rapid finalization of the convention, as an imperative that stems from its own perception of security: a convention which will free the Earth of all chemical weapons within 10 years after it enters into force; which, through effective surveillance, will prevent any covert production; and which, at the same time, inter alia as a result of appropriate co-operation measures, will make this attractive and acceptable to all.

Today emphasis is rightly placed, in all disarmament sectors, on the increasing importance of measures for building confidence. This has been and is still being discussed a great deal, and not without tangible successes, in the European negotiations. Consequently we wonder whether even in the CW negotiations, aside from the essential question of verification, the individuation of common ground in the area of assistance and technical co-operation might not constitute per se an important element of confidence-building and an additional encouragement to become a party. I have already referred to our perception of the convention as being the only means for reaching a more pacificatory situation. In this respect the question of assistance seems to us to be of special political importance, in the transitional period but also beyond.

Challenge inspections are, in Italy's view, the confidence-building measure par excellence. Intensive efforts have been made to uphold the merits of a purely bilateral, or alternatively a purely multilateral approach, in a debate which seems to be heading towards more balanced consideration of this dilemma, in which the two aspects are merged one into the other in a relationship of complementarity. Indeed, the very originality of this treaty lies in a balanced combination of bilateral and multilateral elements. Thus while the starting-point of challenge verification falls essentially, within the bilateral sphere, subsequent intervention by the multilateral organization implies inevitably, as my delegation sees it, that the final evaluation of the possible existence of a violation, as well as any decisions resulting from that evaluation, would fall to the body whose task will be to ensure that the convention is observed.

I would now like to express a few ideas concerning the problem of universality. This is a question which goes beyond a confidence-building measure, of which it is in a way the prerequisite. I do not think anyone would deny that the convention must be universally accepted if we hope that at the end of the transitional period chemical weapons will truly be eliminated from the Earth. Differences remain, however, concerning the most effective means of reaching that point. In this respect we deem it important not to forget the diversity of perceptions of security which exist in different countries, which sometimes face specific difficult situations. Thus in the present phase