

(Mr. Varkonyi, Hungary)

In recent years the question of prohibiting chemical weapons has rightly commanded the attention of the participants in the Conference on Disarmament. To the satisfaction of all of us, the elaboration of the draft agreement has been progressing markedly. Nevertheless, I now feel obliged to voice concern, as the latest round of talks and events outside their framework fail to hold out much promise for early conclusion of the agreement.

Hungary continues to stand for complete prohibition under strict verification and control, and for the complete destruction of stockpiles. It is regrettable that the compromise proposals which the Soviet Union and other socialist countries put forward last year have not yet produced the rightly expected results.

I wish to pay tribute to the Soviet Government for having opened last year the chemical weapons facility at Shikhany to the delegations participating in the talks and to the international press, as well as having published data on Soviet stockpiles of chemical weapons. Such moves make a significant contribution to strengthening mutual confidence and improving the atmosphere of negotiations.

However, the success of talks is by no means promoted by proposals to maintain rather than destroy the existing stockpiles, or even likely to result in their increase. The chances of agreement are impaired by the decision to start the production of binary chemical weapons in the United States. Such unfavourable developments are warnings that the Conference on Disarmament should redouble efforts for the speedy elaboration of the agreement.

Speaking on this point I should like to confirm that the Hungarian People's Republic has no stockpile of chemical weapons or industrial establishments manufacturing such weapons. It does not carry out any sort of research on chemical weapons, nor does it intend to possess such weapons in the future. Furthermore, I can reaffirm that no other country stores any kind of chemical weapons or carries out any kind of related activity in the territory of the Hungarian People's Republic.

We believe that openness regarding the possession or non-possession of stockpiles of different weapons serves to contribute to the strengthening of confidence. It would therefore be welcome if other countries did not keep the international community in a state of uncertainty. In the spirit of the draft agreement being elaborated, I can now inform this Conference that of the key precursors of chemical weapons, the following two are produced for civilian use in Hungary: chemicals containing a P-methyl and/or P-ethyl bond, at one plant, and methyl and/or ethyl esters of phosphorous acid, at three plants. All of these products are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.