

(Mr Karhilo, Finland)

... In this forum Finland especially welcomes the new US-Soviet agreement on the gradual elimination of their chemical weapons. Although conditional, the commitments announced in Moscow on 10 February mark in a concrete way the recognition of the special responsibility which the great Powers - the possessors of the largest CW stocks - have ahead of complete CW elimination.

This mutual preparedness of the great Powers to start the destruction of the bulk of their CW stocks to equal low levels pending the conclusion of the CW convention is, in Finland's view, an important catalyst for resolving the remaining political problems in the multilateral CW negotiations. The focus of the negotiations in the CD must by their nature be global, but the bilateral progress in the CW issues is a valuable and necessary contribution to our talks in Geneva. We hope that the finalizing stage will soon be at hand and that the political commitments to the expeditious conclusion of the convention - made by the Paris and Canberra Conferences - will be redeemed this year.

During the last decade disarmament has become unthinkable without strict verification. Indeed, some earlier agreements, like the biological weapons convention, are today considered inadequate in this respect. The detailed provisions required for an adequate verification régime necessarily involve time-consuming drafting and testing of methods and instruments.

The verification of the CW convention will be more complex than in any disarmament agreement yet. Despite all the work that has been done on this subject, doubts are still occasionally voiced as to the verifiability of the convention. The relative ease and inexpensiveness of the manufacture of CW agents has been cited as a factor which renders the verification of compliance impossible.

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