

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

Let me turn now to an area where our performance has been less than outstanding - the Conference's annual report-writing process. This process threatens to get out of control. I submit that we spend too much time (approximately 3 of our 24 working weeks) and too much money (well more than \$US 1,000 a page) on report-writing. The time has come for reform.

During my recent CD presidency I made a serious attempt to reduce the CD report-writing effort in order to allocate more time to our CW negotiations. I suggested preparing a relatively brief report, based on the requirements of rule 45. This would have meant dropping the compilation of groups' political views on each agenda item - the most time-consuming, contentious and wasteful part of the report-writing effort. It replicates information available elsewhere, and it generates large quantities of political smoke and fire more appropriate to the General Assembly than to the more practical negotiating body we work in. Furthermore, the CD secretariat asked that the CW portion of the report be shortened by dropping appendix II, thereby saving a significant amount of money.

While these objectives had broad support, some participants insisted there could be no changes in cherished routines. Only in the case of the radiological weapons and outer space ad hoc committee reports have we thus far seen efforts made to shorten reports or eliminate political wrangling. Everywhere else we see business as usual - or worse. The NSA and NTB committee draft reports are already heavily politicized, in some cases with rhetoric reminiscent of the height of the cold war. In the NTB draft report one regional group has taken a verbatim transcript approach and is attempting to drive in more than eight full pages of text advertising or supporting its views. They have resorted to distortion of fact and misrepresentation of the views of others. The West was left with few options to achieve the necessary accuracy and balance, other than to draft eight pages of its own if it wished to propose them for bitter negotiation. So much for the effort to reduce the CD report-writing chore so as to devote more time to CW!

While I held your seat, Mr. President, my position required me to act evenhandedly and to take the views of all CD members and groups into account in conducting our business. To some extent I had to put my national role and objectives on the shelf during that period. That is no longer the case. While it may be too late for wholesale changes in the report-writing process, I propose that we try now to begin a less politicized and more cost-effective effort. Specifically, I would urge the negative security assurances and nuclear test ban ad hoc committee chairmen to try to limit political position statements by each group to no more than one or two pages each. This limit should also apply to the reports on CESNAR, PNW and CPD. My delegation is prepared to withhold consensus on those substantive sections of the CD report which are polemical, imbalanced, and unfactual.