

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

However, my delegation's position is that this Conference is not the forum for bilateral issues. In the case of the latter, we have been making honest and serious efforts, apart from the negotiations in this Conference, and we are working towards a successful settlement of them. I do not wish therefore to dwell upon this side of our efforts. I will simply state that the working paper submitted this morning gives preliminary data exemplifying one case of abandoned weapons.

In order to arrive at a satisfactory framework for dealing with the question of abandoned chemical weapons, I have to reiterate the positions we have consistently taken on this question. Old and abandoned chemical weapons discovered by States parties to this convention will not all be of the same type - there are many different varieties. Also, it is a fact that any State party has sovereignty over its territory and should have primary concern for the destruction of such weapons. I do not insist that this should be stated as a responsibility, but rather as a concern - in normal cases - for the country which finds such weapons on its territory. The amount may be small, and the time that has elapsed between the abandoning and discovery may be so long that they may not be poisoned or dangerous and might perhaps be dealt with as a question of environmental hazard. This should be easy to do in many cases. However, there may be other cases where a country discovering such old and abandoned weapons may not find it easy to destroy them.

As regards provision in the convention - as may be supported by some States members of this Conference - if destruction is to be made the responsibility of the abandoning State, then it is my delegation's view that this may introduce complications, because the abandoning State will not normally have jurisdiction or the sovereign right to enter the territory of another State party where abandoned chemical weapons may be discovered; also, it may sometimes be very difficult to establish or identify the country which may have abandoned them. The abandoning State may not be a State party to the Convention. Thus, a loophole or gap may be created, i.e., that nobody will destroy such dangerous abandoned weapons. The existing provisions of the "rolling text", after many years of negotiations, seem to have received the support of most nations. My delegation believes that if it is established that a certain country has abandoned old chemical weapons and the country where they are discovered wishes the abandoning country to cooperate, such an arrangement should certainly be provided for in the convention. We will carefully study the concrete proposals which the Chinese delegation has presented in the past and today. In particular, my delegation is interested in the proposal regarding article X, for cases where the identity of abandoned chemical weapons has not been established, providing for assistance in their destruction by the technical secretariat. That kind of provision is one way to close the gap, so in that sense my delegation will be greatly interested in studying further that kind of very constructive proposal.

Also I should like to point out that even in the Chairman's summary on this question for 1990 it was stated that the discovering State should not a priori be made responsible for the destruction of such weapons. At the same time, however, it did not state that the abandoning State should have this