

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

There is general agreement that, in addition to providing for cessation of the production of chemical weapons and for their destruction, the convention we are negotiating should also expressly ban the use of such weapons. The inclusion of such a provision will not only reaffirm the ban on use as set out in the 1925 Geneva Protocol but, by doing so in a context which includes specific provision for the verification of any allegations of use, will significantly strengthen the authority of the Protocol. We must ensure, of course, that nothing in the convention undermines the continuing authority of the 1925 Protocol - the point raised by my distinguished colleague, Ambassador Huslid of Norway, earlier this week and a point which has regularly been raised by the French delegation, to whom we are indebted as the guardians of that Protocol.

Canada was therefore particularly pleased to join with Norway in preparing a proposed annex to article IX entitled "General procedures for verification of alleged use of chemical weapons". It attempts to set out a practical, workable framework for verifying allegations of use. We are indebted to Ambassador Huslid for the clarity with which he introduced this joint proposal for our collective consideration. Norway, although not yet officially a member of the CD, has consistently contributed most usefully to our work over many years. Like Canada, Norway has devoted special attention to questions relating to chemical weapons use. This has proved invaluable in the formulation of the proposed annex to article IX. Yet I suggest that the full value of the Norwegian and Canadian research efforts in these areas, much of which is of a highly technical nature, may come to be appreciated only after a convention is concluded and a technical secretariat has been set up to implement the convention and all its verification requirements. The same point could be made about the valuable work which Finland has shared, over the years, with the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors.

The proposed annex reflects our view that any type of use of chemical weapons would constitute the most serious kind of breach of the convention and that the verification requirement must be of a rigour that reflects the gravity of any such allegation. It takes cognizance of what seems to be an emerging consensus within this forum that the investigation of an alleged use must involve short-notice, on-site inspections. As formulated, the proposed annex aims to include provisions relating to procedures, techniques and allocation of responsibility at appropriate levels of both generality and precision, while allowing for the reality that many procedural and technical details will need to be worked out, by the Technical Secretariat under the supervision of the Executive Council. The annex aims to provide the necessary framework and guidance within which the more detailed procedures and techniques can be devised and effectively implemented. We join with the Norwegian delegation in commending it to the attention of the Conference for inclusion in the rolling text of the convention.

Earlier in my comments, I made a generally positive appreciation of the manner in which our negotiations are now proceeding. I also cited concrete events which underline the importance and urgency of our making progress. In concluding, I would like to register a cautionary note. We are embarked upon some of the most politically sensitive, legally intricate and technically demanding multilateral arms negotiations ever undertaken. If we are