

(Mr. Chadha, India)

... Let me now turn to the subject of the chemical weapons negotiations. The necessary framework to deal with the pending issues was set up at the beginning of this year through the resourceful and methodical leadership provided by the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Hyltenius, and his hardworking delegation. Yet, as the session draws to a close and we take stock of the situation, our feelings are mixed. Undeniably, we have made some progress, but, against the background of the political will and the sense of urgency expressed in Paris last year, the progress has been disappointing.

We must recognize that time is running out and accept the political fact that the only way to rid mankind of chemical weapons is through the conclusion of a comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention which ensures that all existing chemical weapons stocks and chemical weapons production facilities are eliminated; and that the further development, production, acquisition, transfer and use of these weapons is prohibited. Interim measures designed to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons, apart from not being effective, also run the risk of opening up a parallel track which could easily derail ongoing negotiations and confuse the objective towards which we are working. Political reality dictates that the risk does not merely come from the possible use of chemical weapons, but from their very existence, and the only way to address this reality is to find a politically viable solution.

A convention that can enjoy universal adherence must be non-discriminatory, must provide for equal rights and obligations of all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons, and whether or not they have a large chemical industry. It must contain an effective system of verification that reassures all States parties about compliance. To this end, my delegation is willing to discuss all details regarding such a verification system in any form. It is only through a sustained and frank dialogue that the different perceptions can be resolved, and not through polemics and procedural wrangles that we have witnessed recently, which only retard our progress. The convention should ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes and should not hinder or impede international co-operation in the development of the chemical industry for such purposes.

Adequate provision has already been made in the draft convention for consultations, co-operation and fact-finding; and the periodic conferences of States parties would provide an opportunity for continuous review of the working of the convention. The proposed provision for a special conference of States parties to review the implementation of the principles and objectives of the convention eight years from its entry into force, a conference in which those who possess chemical weapons would be accorded special privileges, far from achieving the desired objective of universality, would in fact have the opposite effect, as States may tend to shy away from joining a convention

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