

(Mr. Depasse, Belgium)

That is the price of the credibility of the convention. My delegation particularly appreciates the constructive efforts made to solve this problem of verification and non-production, including the important aspect of verification by challenge. It has noted with great interest the proposals transmitted to our Conference by the United Kingdom Minister of State, Mr. Richard Luce, on 12 March 1985. It regards the United Kingdom Working Paper as an extremely useful contribution to our work.

It hopes, in connection with the problems raised by the Working Paper, as well as on all other questions of substance still open, that delegations will take a decision during this session. Belgium considers that in view of the stage we have reached on this topic it would be advisable to give priority to considering basic political options so that the essential provisions of the drafts for the treaty can emerge during the 1985 session. I should like to add that Belgium will certainly experience major administrative difficulties should it be decided to continue work between the 1985 and the 1986 sessions -- difficulties shared by many other delegations. But it will contribute to reaching consensus on such an extension, the importance of which it regards as primordial in comparison with the bureaucratic, budgetary and administrative difficulties.

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Mr. LOWITZ (United States of America): Mr. President, negotiations to ban chemical weapons have been under way for over 10 weeks thus far this year. During our plenary sessions devoted to these important negotiations, it is appropriate to take stock -- to determine what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. That is what I propose to do today.

1985 marks the sixth year of the existence -- in one form or another -- of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. Under the leadership of a series of dedicated chairmen, significant progress has been made towards a complete and verifiable ban on chemical weapons. Many delegations have contributed to the development of guiding concepts and to the elaboration of specific provisions.

Last year my own delegation presented a draft convention (document CD/500) which built upon the work already accomplished in the Conference and incorporated a number of new ideas of our own. The convention would provide a complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons without undue interference in the use of chemicals for permitted purposes. To ensure confidence in compliance -- confidence which is essential for an effective ban -- the convention would provide for a system of routine declarations and inspections of key facilities, supplemented by a flexible system for resolving concerns that may arise. It is our view that the types of verification measures contained in the United States draft convention would serve the interests of all countries.

This year, Finland and the United Kingdom have presented carefully elaborated and very constructive Working Papers. We welcome their dedicated work.

But despite our efforts, an impartial assessment of our present situation must be that the really difficult problems remain. Moreover, time does not favour those that seek a chemical weapons ban. Let me address the latter point first.

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