

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

Australia in September. It can provide an opportunity for serious discussion between government and industry, not only on the negotiations but also on other aspects of chemical weapons arms control, such as the growing problems of the movements of chemical weapons precursors and technology in international commerce. From the beginning of the negotiations, the United States Government and the United States chemical industry have recognized the importance of providing assurance that the civil chemical industry is not being misused for illegal chemical weapons production activities. Since 1977, government and industry have been working together to develop provisions for a future chemical weapons convention that will provide effective verification and at the same time protect legitimate sensitive and confidential business information.

The United States welcomed the suggestion in 1988 that States participating in the negotiations conduct trial inspections in the civil chemical industry to assist the negotiating process. In February 1989, United States experts conducted a national trial inspection at the facility operated by Akzo Chemicals in West Virginia. This facility produces schedule [2] chemicals from a schedule [3] chemical. The schedule [2] chemicals are legitimate commercial products that are used as flame retardants and for other purposes. I have already provided preliminary comments on this trial inspection in my plenary statement on 4 April. Today the report on this first trial inspection is being distributed as document CD/922. This report describes in detail the activities that were carried out, and it outlines our findings.

One of the most important findings is that further work is necessary in specific areas identified in the report. The United States views this first national trial inspection as the beginning of a process to develop and refine inspection procedures, not as a test of procedures that are close to final form. This first trial inspection omitted testing some necessary procedures, such as notification, transportation, and escort arrangements. Other gaps have also been recognized, and procedures need to be improved. Thus, it is clear to us that further work on a national level, especially additional trial inspections, will be necessary to establish a realistic data base. This emphasis on further work at the national level does not mean that we oppose discussion of possible approaches to multilateral follow-on efforts. We will seek to ensure, however, that multilateral activities contribute to the negotiation of effective verification provisions. In our view activities should be organized to facilitate broad acceptance of the results. Thus, the activities should be based on multilaterally agreed objectives, they should provide realistic tests, and they should involve all interested delegations in the preparation and conduct of the activities.

In the absence of realistic and valid multilaterally agreed inspection procedures, and adequate protection for confidential business information, we question the value of multilateral equivalents of the national trial inspections. We need well grounded, business-like experiments, and not media events. We are concerned that such efforts either will be superficial, and therefore a poor model for inspections under the convention, or that they will be inadequate to protect confidential information. We also are sceptical that