

(Mr. Summerhayes, United Kingdom)

points upon which we hold a different view from that expressed by the delegation of India. In particular, we are surprised to find that he considers that document CD/205 does not provide an idea of the route along which we must travel towards general and complete disarmament. In our view, document CD/205 does provide such a route, particularly for the first part of the journey. Thereafter, we have sketched out some possible paths to follow; but we do not consider that it is feasible, when the map is largely uncharted, to go further without adequate review. As I have indicated, however, we believe that the possibility of reaching agreement on the comprehensive programme does exist and that we should now concentrate our efforts in the Working Group on this aim.

Although, as I have made clear, my delegation attaches particular importance at this time to the CPD negotiations, we also believe that members of the Committee should not lose sight of the more direct contribution they can make to progress on arms control through the Committee's work on radiological weapons and, still more, on chemical weapons.

My delegation demonstrated its belief in the value of the early completion of negotiations on a final text of a convention to ban radiological weapons by its support for resolution 36/97 B at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are again ready at this present session to play a constructive part in discussions aimed at achieving a generally acceptable text; success in these discussions could provide a useful, if modest, step further forward in arms control. The importance of the measure lies not so much in the likely imminence of the introduction of such weapons -- for radiological weapons would certainly be very difficult to employ -- but in the incalculable and uncontrollable nature of their effects, which could persist long after a war in which the weapons were used, thus affecting future generations. That is sufficient reason for banning this potential class of weapons. I believe that we are most likely to achieve our objective by concentrating on the specific and well-definable issues which were still to be resolved at the end of last year rather than by attempting to cast our net too wide.

I should like now to turn to the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons, which covered a great deal of ground last year under the able and energetic chairmanship of Ambassador Lidgard of Sweden. The United Kingdom destroyed its entire stock of chemical weapons more than 10 years ago and my Government remains committed, as it has been since negotiations first began in the CCD, to seeking a comprehensive, effective and adequately verifiable ban on chemical weapons. My delegation therefore very much welcomed the intensive consideration of the range of issues covered last year. The report of the Working Group showed that there is still a great deal to be done, but it also pointed to a number of areas where a convergence of views is beginning to develop. We hope that the momentum created last year will be maintained during this session; we would, in particular, think it highly regrettable if the work of this Group were in any way to be held up by procedural considerations. We look forward to further substantive progress to report to the second special session devoted to disarmament and, in this connection,