

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

stating the obvious to say that the Canadian Government fully shares that view. What may not be so obvious is that such a statement could not have been made four years ago.

As I pointed out in my statement last month, verification performs a series of central functions, the most important being deterrence of non-compliance, confidence-building, removal of uncertainty and treaty assessment. The success this year of the working group on verification at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, under Canadian chairmanship, in reaching provisional agreement on several verification principles, further testifies to the emerging international consensus on these issues. This has to be seen as progress. Thus while verification is sometimes portrayed as an obstacle in the way of a solution, for Canada it has always been a central part of the solution.

It is in this context that I welcome and acknowledge the importance of the statement made in this room by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Mr. Shevardnadze, when he said that "real verification" ought to involve "foolproof, indisputable, reliable and extremely strict and rigorous methods". The specific verification-related suggestions he made at that time in relation to chemical weapons, outer space and nuclear testing will be studied with care by Canadian authorities with these criteria in mind. I should like to come back later to the question of the standards to be sought in verification measures.

When I came to Geneva in the fall of 1983, the framework of a future chemical weapons convention had just been agreed under the chairmanship of my predecessor. Interestingly, in the light of the hours -- days -- weeks we spend on procedural questions related to mandates and subsidiary bodies, that level of progress had been reached in spite of the existence of an ad hoc Committee without a negotiating mandate. I suggest that there is a lesson for us to be drawn from this, particularly in the context of the report of the Group of Seven on our working methods.

The following year the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons adopted a negotiating mandate and developed its first "rolling text" under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Ekéus. In the intervening years considerable progress has been achieved, article by article, in large measure due to the hard work, perseverance and initiative of successive chairmen of the Committee -- Ambassador Turbanski and Ambassador Cromartie -- and also the co-ordinators of the working groups, as well as participating delegations which have contributed dozens of working papers. The process received a boost in 1984 with the tabling of a draft treaty by the United States. More recently, major initiatives by the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union on the difficult issue of challenge inspection have brought us closer to resolving most remaining differences surrounding this problem. That has to be seen as very tangible progress.

We are again this year indebted to Ambassador Ekéus, whose able and dynamic chairmanship has ensured that the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons has achieved valuable results on key issues. Some speakers have suggested that the pace of negotiations has slowed down after the impressive gains in 1986 and the spring session this year. This is not so, in the view of my