

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

In this connection, I take pleasure in introducing today on behalf of both Canada and the Netherlands a report on a joint Canada/Netherlands chemical weapons trial challenge inspection of a military facility. This report is being circulated as document CD/1052, and also bears the number CD/CW/WP.327.

The inspection, which took place from 26 to 28 November 1990 at an operational military airfield containing garrisoned land forces, was the first bilateral trial inspection in the chemical weapons field for both participating countries. I may remark that the Netherlands has also been involved in a number of bilateral trial inspections in the field of conventional arms control. Last year, two joint inspection exercises took place with Poland to provide practical experience for the negotiations on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed in Paris on 19 November 1990. As a further training effort for the implementation of this Treaty, a joint Canada/Netherlands trial inspection was held this week in the Netherlands. Observers from our partners in the Western European Union were invited to take part on that occasion.

I come back now to our Joint Canada/Netherlands chemical weapons trial inspection. Building on the experience of earlier national trial inspections, the aims of the inspection were firstly, to further test the inspection procedures laid down in the "rolling text"; secondly, to ascertain that compliance with a chemical weapons convention could be demonstrated without sensitive information being divulged; and, finally, to continue the training of the participants in organizing, carrying out and escorting such an inspection.

The inspection, carried out by Netherlands as well as Canadian inspectors, demonstrated the utility of conducting multinational exercises. It also demonstrated that reliable conclusions could be drawn under circumstances of managed access at an operational military facility. Furthermore, the exercise yielded a number of useful conclusions on problems still under discussion in the CD and pointed to some areas that still need to be addressed in our negotiations, and, perhaps, in the protocol on inspection procedures in the draft convention. These conclusions and recommendations are laid out in the report. Allow me, Mr. President, to dwell on a few of them.

With regard to the notification of the inspection site and the arrival of the inspection team, Canada and the Netherlands opted for the procedure whereby the site is notified by the requesting State after arrival of the inspection team at the point of entry, rather than simultaneously with the notification of the inspection request to the inspected State. In real life this would have enhanced the element of surprise. It was concluded, however, that the "rolling text" leaves many ambiguities as to the precise procedures that should be followed up to the actual beginning of the inspection. The exact time of the start of the inspection, for instance, about which the "rolling text" says little, leaves considerable opportunity for dispute. At the same time, the Technical Secretariat would encounter quite a number of problems in forming an inspection team if it was unaware, at that time, of the type and size of the site to be inspected.