

(Mr. Rajakowski, Finland)

There are signs of undeniable progress in this respect. The conditions for an advance in verification problems relating to arms limitation may further improve in the coming years. Progress in the field of detection seismology has, in our view, largely improved the possibilities for solving the verification problems associated with a comprehensive test ban, a longstanding priority issue on the international disarmament agenda. Recently, views on prohibiting chemical weapons appear to have converged significantly. Both technically and politically, the problems related to the verification of a possible chemical weapons convention may have come closer to their solution.

Chemical weapons are universally considered particularly repugnant. Recent controversies relating to the development, manufacture, storage and use of these weapons are proof of this. Possibilities for progress towards the elimination of chemical weapons exist perhaps now more than before. I have in mind certain statements made in this Committee in the past days as well as proposals put forward in other forums. We look forward with some optimism to the possibilities of negotiated results to ban chemical weapons.

The Finnish Government has for its part devoted particular efforts towards facilitating international negotiations for a comprehensive ban on chemical warfare agents. As is well known to members of the Committee, Finland in 1971 initiated a research project for the analytical verification of chemical warfare agents. The goal was to create a comprehensive monitoring system which would apply equally to all areas covered by an eventual agreement. This would be achieved through a detailed verification manual and an automatic method of analysis to be used by the signatories of an eventual agreement in carrying out reliable analysis in a standardized manner. The same method could also be used by international monitoring organs, should such be created.

The Finnish project started in 1972 in the form of laboratory research aiming at creating sufficient scientific experience and methodological capacity in the field of chemical weapons. The first substantial report with concrete laboratory results was published in 1977 with the title "Chemical and instrumental verification of organophosphorus warfare agents".

In 1979 a large handbook was presented to the Committee on Disarmament with the title "An approach for the standardization of techniques and reference data". This study introduced the application of several highly sensitive instrumental techniques and described the possibility for their automatization in order to improve the reliability of the identification of individual compounds. Further, the identification of the degradation products of all important nerve agents was studied in 1980.

The following year, in 1981, an approach for the environmental monitoring of nerve agents was presented in a more comprehensive manner. In 1982 the same automatic methods were applied to 20 of the most important non-phosphorus agents.

Together, the three parts on systematic identification published in 1979, 1980 and 1982 form an identification handbook in which the collection and concentration, retreatment and analysis by five instrumental methods are presented. In these three handbooks more than a hundred chemical warfare agents or related compounds synthesized by the project are analysed and detailed analytical results are presented.