

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

recess the type of approach outlined in the Contact Group's report. We should come back next year ready to come to grips with this problem, on which we seem close to reaching agreement.

Under Mr. Lundin's able guidance, Contact Group D also produced some very useful results on definitions, although my delegation was disappointed at the unwillingness of some delegations to become engaged in a serious discussion of a possible list or lists of key precursors. The report, nevertheless, contains much food for thought, not least in the area in which my delegation has taken a special interest, the verification of the non-production of chemical weapons. Delegations will by now have seen the working paper my delegation has tabled, showing the information we have so far received, from other delegations to the Committee on Disarmament, and also from non-member States, on the production levels of the key precursors listed in our earlier paper CD/353. We would very much welcome further information in this area from other delegations, and we hope that at the beginning of the next session such information will be forthcoming. It is perhaps too early to draw any firm conclusions from the information received, but the results to date, recorded in the revised table, suggest that the procedures we have proposed in CD/353 would affect only a relatively small number of factories in the world. While delegations are holding discussions with their chemical industries on the question of civil production, we would like to suggest that they should also inquire about any production of super-toxic lethal compounds for civil uses. We would expect such uses to be extremely limited, because the very high toxicity of these compounds makes them difficult to handle. This information would help us to assess more clearly the practicality of proposals already on the table for limitations on the production of these compounds for civil purposes, and to enable us to see whether other means of verifying their production for civil purposes could be devised.

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the statement on chemical weapons made at our last plenary meeting on 18 August by the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union; I should like to make some preliminary comments on some of the points he made. My delegation welcomes the agreement by the Soviet Union to include in the future convention a provision for a declaration within 30 days of stocks of chemical warfare agents and munitions specifying the relevant chemical names and toxicities. A requirement for full detailed declaration of stocks immediately after the convention comes into force will contribute to the confidence that will be needed to enable States to ratify the convention, and to sustain it during the long transitional period of 10 years proposed for the destruction of stocks.

Unfortunately, however, the reverse is true of the Soviet proposal that parties to the convention should only be required to start the elimination of facilities for chemical weapons production eight years after the convention comes into force. If we have understood their proposal correctly, the declaration of the location of production facilities would not necessarily be required until a year later, that is to say, nine years after entry into force. During these long periods other parties to the convention would seem to have no assurance that chemical warfare agents were not being produced at these unknown locations. My delegation finds this position hard to square with the proposal of the German Democratic Republic, supported by the Soviet Union, that the destruction of plants for the production of binary weapons should begin within six months, and be completed within two years after the convention enters into force. The components of binary weapons are necessarily immediate precursors in the synthesis of the super-toxic agents they are designed to generate; and, in at least some cases, they are also precursors in the normal