

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

very interesting statement made on 15 July by the British Minister of State, Mr. Renton, who indicated a new approach for the procedures to be followed in face of a request for challenge inspections. My Government, after careful study of this proposal, has reached the conclusion that this new proposal offers an appropriate basis for dealing with this thorny issue. Whereas the proposed provisions ensure stringent rules that do not permit a country to get away with a simple negative reaction to a request for challenge inspection, it at the same time also prevents challenge inspections becoming the rule. An inappropriate use of the challenge inspection clause, should be avoided, so as to ensure a balanced implementation of the treaty.

But whatever the final outcome of negotiations on this crucial issue in the negotiations may be, it is important that delegations, in particular those who have been most critical of positions previously taken, will offer their comments, adopt their own position within a reasonably brief time-frame.

In general, we think that both governments and delegations here in Geneva should become more time-conscious. Time is in this case perhaps our greatest enemy, because if we wait too long this can only lead to more proliferation of CW to more countries, to the production of more weapons and to a more widespread use of CW, such as we have been witness of in the Iraq-Iran war.

Since time is becoming such a precious, even essential, factor in our negotiations, we also think that we should deal more effectively with the time available between the end of the summer session and the beginning of the spring session in 1987. Ambassador Cromartie's efforts to find a generally acceptable formula for the inter-session consultations have our full support.

We also think it worth while to reconsider the structure of the CW negotiations in the future. In the first place, we believe that, if we really wish to do business, our time schedule should no longer be dependent on timing of conferences and meetings taking place elsewhere. I recognize that for some delegations it is difficult to cover at the same time the sessions of the First Committee and those of the Conference on Disarmament. However, a solution must be found for this dilemma, by permitting negotiators on CW to work the whole year around on CW only.

In the second place, I think that it is worth while to consider whether it is not appropriate to follow another rhythm in the negotiations, so as to be able to alternate negotiating rounds with periods of homework, in order to prepare instructions for the next round.

Mr. Renton suggested that we aim to present a complete chemical weapons convention to the United Nations General Assembly in 1987. I think 1987 is indeed a crucial year. If in 1987 we do not break the back of the problems, we run the risk that negotiations will be slipping. We would therefore be interested in a discussion now on the way we wish to organize our work next year.