

(Mr. O'Sullivan, Australia)

Clearly one of the most efficient and productive ways to understand the objectives and the political, legal and practical implications of a future CWC is through active participation in the negotiations themselves. In practice, this opportunity has been realized by a number of observer delegations, and especially in our CWC negotiations. Observer States can and do participate both through the submission of working papers and orally in the proceedings of the CWC Ad Hoc Committee and its working groups. During the course of the negotiations in 1991 we would encourage non-member States to make known their views on specific aspects of the "rolling text" of concern to them so that they can be considered fully.

Another approach to promoting universality that has made sense to Australia has been to engage in a serious dialogue with our neighbours in the Asia/Pacific areas about this treaty and what it would imply for them. I had the privilege of being present in Brisbane in November 1990 at the second regional seminar against chemical weapons hosted by the Australian Government. There were 23 regional States present of whom only three are colleagues here in the CD; that is Indonesia, Burma and ourselves. It was apparent that there is a big gap in understanding this far-reaching and complex treaty between those of us who sit in this room and who are familiar in detail with its concepts and its specific provisions, and those busy government officials in other countries who are not here but who nevertheless will be required to undertake the considerable administrative and commercial requirements that the convention will impose.

In asking Governments to accept those requirements we need to be clear that we are delivering tangible security benefits in return. This means to our minds that the concepts and working arrangements that are embodied in the treaty particularly in the area of verification must not be designed to be so elaborate or to be required to cover such highly theoretical possibilities that they put at risk those benefits. Ultimately the treaty like all treaties can only bind with ropes of paper. If there is not the political willingness to abide by its provisions then its internal mechanisms cannot force proper behaviour on States. But on the other hand, a well-balanced, sensible, clear treaty can establish norms and give confidence to all its adherents that its benefits of enhanced security and equal commercial impact will be realized.

In order to achieve that equal commercial impact, the Australian Government has actively sought collaboration with the international chemical industry not as a partner with us here in the negotiations but as an interested and knowledgeable resource on whom much of the impact of this convention will fall. A recent example of productive Government-industry exchanges was the meeting in January 1991 in Bangkok of the ASEAN Chemical Industries Club at which a colleague from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was able to give a presentation on the state of our negotiations here. It is also pleasing that this Conference has had further involvement with industry over the past year. And may I say that we welcome very much the ideas put forward by Sweden this morning in document CD/1053? We will examine them sympathetically and closely.

For our part, the Australian Government and the Australian chemical industry will continue to look for opportunities to continue this dialogue with our regional neighbours so that all States in our region will be well