

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

little more than a political commitment to abandon these weapons. The international community has attempted to close the gap between this commitment and the need to verify compliance with the Treaty to some extent by means of the confidence-building measures drawn up three years ago. The Netherlands contributed to their coming into being. This should not close our eyes for the fact that even if there had been a verification system, water-tight control, would still have been extremely difficult, given the ease with which biological weapons can be manufactured in secret.

The third review conference on the biological weapons Convention will be held in September 1991. We should already be reflecting about ways and means of strengthening the treaty and verifying compliance, in order to halt and reverse the continuing proliferation. It is therefore high time that we embarked on international consultations on these matters. I am considering making a Dutch contribution to this process by inviting a number of interested countries to attend a seminar-type conference on this vital issue in the Netherlands.