

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

that the normal operations of the chemical industry must not be affected. In view of a recurrent tendency that has been observed in the negotiations in the Committee to insist on complex and indeed costly formulations, I will not hesitate to repeat today that this article deals with activities not prohibited by the convention, in other words, perfectly legitimate activities.

Advocates of these sophisticated verification systems have argued that the risk that certain facilities could pose for the convention should not be side-stepped. Risk, as everyone knows, is a category that pertains to the realm of perception. There is nothing less uniform in the field of disarmament than the security perceptions of the negotiating States. Hence what some might consider of paramount importance as a risk assessment parameter - production capacity, multi-purpose capability of a facility - could be perceived by others as less important than, for instance, its location. In other words, the fact that a plant might be located in an isolated place or might possess power sources indicating a high level of activity or one that would be difficult to justify under normal circumstances. Above all there is the political assessment of those involved, both that of the party assessing the risk and that of the potential transgressor. I sincerely believe that at this stage of our negotiations any risk assessment exercise which aspired to unanimity would be doomed to failure. This is why, as far as the Argentine Republic is concerned, an appropriate verification regime within the framework of article VI must be open, but at the same time realistic and circumscribed by parameters which are attainable and manageable both from the political and from the financial point of view.

The chemical weapons convention, as has been repeatedly stated, is a security treaty. This is its logical nerve-centre and the indisputable focal point of its content must be the provisions designed to secure the elimination and prevent the reappearance of chemical weapons. Therefore, for Argentina the chemical weapons convention must be equipped with a verification system which is sound and coherent from the viewpoint of security, and able to play effectively the deterrent role that any verification mechanism must play in order to discourage, or attach a very high political cost to, any breach of its provisions. That is why in our opinion the verification system under article IX is par excellence the most important element within the treaty's verification system if the treaty is to become a really successful agreement with universal adherence. I would therefore like to raise one or two ideas relating to the negotiations on article IX, and in particular challenge inspections, which we are concentrating on at the moment. Our thinking draws on consideration at the national level of what would be the implications and the scope of the system of challenge inspections, measured against the objectives of the convention and the legitimate security concerns that all the future States parties have to different degrees in this process.

At the same time, in voicing these ideas we have borne in mind the experience gained thanks to the positive and timely initiative of the delegation of Germany that enabled us to participate in the multilateral trial challenge inspection exercise held in an air base in the Frankfurt-Cologne