

1.0 Introduction

The 1925 Geneva Protocol - prohibiting the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of bacteriological methods of warfare - remains the key to international agreements striving to ensure that such weapons of mass destruction never again be used. However, there have been instances since 1925 when chemical weapons are known to have been used; and others when chemical weapons are alleged to have been used, although circumstances did not permit confirmation or refutation of the allegations. The situation is that the 1925 Geneva Protocol made no provision for the verification of allegations of the use of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. Current negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for a convention which would abolish chemical weapons altogether have recognized the need for a verification regime which, inter alia, would include provision for the verification of allegations of the use of chemical weapons. This need for adequate verification of arms control and disarmament agreements has been recognized and stated in more general terms in the 1978 United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD I), and it has since been reaffirmed by the United Nations.

Since 1925, the international community has been faced with the problem of repeated allegations of the use of chemical (including biotoxin) weapons, but it has not had the means to confirm or refute these allegations. We are all concerned that the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and the deterrent effect of a strong and adverse public reaction to the use of chemical weapons, not be undermined through the inability of the international community to react on the