

(Mr. Velayati, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The criminal action by Iraq has endangered the whole validity of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. If a country such as Iraq can violate this Protocol flagrantly and extensively and also keeps its insistence of its stance, then what kind of guarantee will exist for the implementation of the Protocol and even other international commitments by other countries? We are of the opinion that the Conference on Disarmament must heed and ask the co-operation of the United Nations on the implementation of the following points: first, re-condemnation of the use of chemical weapons as a "war crime"; second, investigation into the suppliers of chemical weapons and substances to Iraq; third, a total ban on the exportation to Iraq of chemical substances and related technology which can be used to manufacture chemical weapons; fourth, the dispatch of an investigation team by the Secretary-General whenever demanded by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the earliest possible date; fifth, a demand to all countries to once again announce their commitment to the 1925 Geneva Protocol which has been weakened by Iraq; and sixth, a direct call on Iraq to commit itself not to repeat the use of chemical weapons. Until the Iraqi régime announces this officially and publicly, we reserve the right to defend ourselves.

In the meantime, it seems that the continuation of the use of chemical weapons by Iraq has drawn the attention of all nations towards the dangers emanating from such weapons and, contrary to other working groups of the Conference on Disarmament, we have been witness to a certain progress. Particularly in the current session on discussions related to the Convention on banning the production, deployment, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons -- although achieving a final result seems remote. Regardless of agreement on those kinds of chemical substances which can be turned into weapons and their inclusion in the Convention, the modalities and nature of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention about other countries and the way of compliance and verification have still not gained any definite agreement. It is true that if any country is given the right of verification whenever its local information provides it, this matter provides certain ground for abuse, but allowing this process to depend on the consent of the other party can also create practical impediments to the implementation of the Treaty. Recent proposals in this area can lead us to a breakthrough although we believe that an international committee should make the final decision and judgement on the verification of each case. Such a committee should give top priority to the verification and destruction of stockpiles and means of producing chemical weapons in those countries identified as users of chemical weapons.

It is unfortunate to say that except in the chemical field, the Conference did not make noticeable progress and that the arms race showed an upward trend. This process, particularly in the field of nuclear weapons, poses a great threat for the future of humanity, capable of destroying the whole globe several times over. There is no winner for a nuclear holocaust while its loser will be the whole of humanity. The development of nuclear arsenals must be stopped immediately as the first step, but it seems that so long as the idea of "deterrence" prevails for achieving supremacy over the world, there will be no hope for the arrest of the arms race. Deterrence is in fact a justification to gain might and use it for expansion of the sphere of influence among the smaller countries. In this context, disarmament is a matter in tune with decolonization moves and the arms race a colonial policy.