

(Mr. Busby, United States)

I noted earlier the problems of proliferation of meetings and of increasing formality of meetings. It may be that having fewer meetings would facilitate progress by enabling delegations to focus their attention, rather than being compelled by circumstances to spread themselves too thinly. We would also urge that greater use be made of private efforts by the co-ordinators of contact groups to clarify problems and develop solutions. Such consultations cannot and should not become a substitute for the work of the contact groups or the Working Group, but they may help to overcome obstacles to progress.

Finally, as pointed out by the Soviet delegation on 18 August, consideration needs to be given to how to make better use of the time available. We share that view and I would today like to introduce a formal initiative from the United States delegation designed to facilitate the Committee's work next year.

As you know, my delegation attaches great importance to the efforts of the Committee on Disarmament to find a common approach to verification of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, which is one of the principal obstacles to agreement. The need to resolve this issue as soon as possible has also been stressed recently by the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, and other member States.

To help accelerate the negotiations, the United States is today inviting member and observer delegations to participate in a workshop to be held at the United States chemical weapons destruction facility at Tooele, Utah. The workshop, which is scheduled for mid-November, will provide a first-hand look at actual procedures used by the United States for destruction of chemical weapons. It is our intention that it will also provide a forum for discussion of various means of verifying destruction of chemical weapons. A working paper outlining the arrangements for the workshop is being distributed today.

In addition to touring the destruction facility and being briefed on its operations, participants will also observe a mock on-site inspection exercise. That exercise will employ actual equipment installed at the destruction facility.

I would like to emphasize that the workshop will not be constructed solely as a platform for United States views. It will provide an opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion of all points of view regarding verification of destruction. It could also provide an opportunity for discussion of other issues closely linked with stockpile destruction, including those raised in the Soviet plenary statement of 18 August. To facilitate a balanced discussion we are inviting a number of delegations with particular interest and expertise in this field to make presentations.

We intend to circulate a more detailed agenda and would welcome suggestions from delegations, with a view to making the workshop as useful as possible. Furthermore, we hope that other countries with destruction facilities, including the Soviet Union, will also consider inviting delegations to their facilities.

As we end the 1983 session, I sense that the frustration and disappointment felt by my delegation are shared by others. But I also sense that we all share a common objective and a desire to achieve it as soon as possible. I trust that delegations will return in 1984 resolved and prepared to make it a year of accomplishment. My delegation certainly will.