

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

In the course of 1984, a full draft Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons was submitted to the Conference by the Government of the United States. We are grateful to the American authorities for this important contribution to our work, which shows the extent of that country's commitment to the success of our efforts. Like any human enterprise, the United States draft can be improved, even on important points. Nevertheless, it constitutes a substantial basis for our work. It would be preferable if those who criticize or oppose it were to make known their views on it in a no less coherent and comprehensive fashion. If criticisms only are expressed, without putting forward any specific proposals, the negotiations will be condemned to turn in circles and the favourable moment for a successful outcome will be missed.

Last year we stressed the problems of destruction of stocks and of production facilities for chemical weapons. We believe that this year, in the light of the experience gained in 1984, we must also place emphasis on the procedures for verification of the observance of the future convention. This is a matter of vital importance; it constitutes the real test of genuine determination to achieve a result and the entire negotiations are bound increasingly to turn around it.

It is our hope that in the present year 1985, under the enlightened direction of Ambassador Turbanski of Poland, an equitable and viable agreement may be reached, an agreement which, on the one hand, fully satisfies the priority requirement that a truly effective convention be drawn up and, on the other hand, is compatible with the differences between the socio-economic systems of the States parties to the negotiation. Only an effective and universally acceptable convention can ensure the protection of mankind against the scourge of chemical warfare. We, for our part, reaffirm our determination to participate, with an open mind, in the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee, our sole aim being the success of our joint efforts.

While the work on chemical weapons is now beginning to progress in the direction of preparation of a draft treaty, other items on our agenda have, notwithstanding their urgency and importance, been given only superficial attention so far and have been discussed only from the procedural angle. This is a situation that is prejudicial to the Conference's image and casts some doubt on the effectiveness of our work.