

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons has recently achieved some progress. The shape of a future chemical weapons convention is becoming clearer. Now is the time to tackle the matter with the seriousness it deserves and proceed to actual drafting work. In this process the problems remaining can be overcome. Let us not waste time in discussions which might lead us away from our common aim — a chemical weapons convention, the elaboration of which is first and foremost a political task and not so much a question of technical perfection.

We noted with interest the recent announcement that a new comprehensive proposal will be tabled by the United States delegation. It is our hope that it will further our work in drafting the convention. But how can one reconcile this announcement with news reports coming these days from the capital of the same country that additional funds — the figure of \$150 million is mentioned — will be allotted to the development and production of new chemical weapons? This is certainly a counterproductive measure, and at the same time, it would be counterproductive perpetually to bring up new verification demands. From the history of negotiations on a comprehensive test ban and other disarmament issues we know what this may lead to.

We stand for a realistic verification system, based on a combination of national and international procedures, including certain on-site inspections. This would correspond to the legitimate interests of all sides in enhancing confidence that the convention is being complied with. So, we do not believe that it is necessary to preach to us the virtues of verification.

At the recent session of the General Assembly, special attention was directed towards countering the qualitative development of chemical weapons and their stationing on the territory of other States, for this worsens conditions for the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention. In short, everything should be avoided which stands in the way of the process of elaborating the convention.

That is why the German Democratic Republic reaffirms the proposal submitted in the Prague Declaration for a Europe free from chemical weapons. Moreover, the Government of my country has officially declared that it is ready to create together with interested States a chemical-weapon-free zone in central Europe and has proposed to enter into appropriate negotiations.

Like other Delegations, we hope that at the current session the Committee will be able to speed up its work in negotiating and elaborating a convention on the complete prohibition and total destruction of chemical weapons with a view to fulfilling at an early date the task of thoroughly eliminating such weapons and detaching them from the earth. The Chinese delegation will continue to make active efforts in this regard.