

(Mr. Sharma, India)

The volume of work done this year is clear from the fact that the report of the Ad hoc Committee runs to 242 pages. As many as 65 working papers were submitted to the Ad hoc Committee. Yet it is also clear that on the crucial issues of challenge inspection, the composition of and decision-making in the Executive Council, the order of destruction and some of the legal issues pertaining to amendments and the entry into force of the CW convention, we do not have new language included in the draft convention. After an initial discussion on the subject of verification which tackled the issue directly and squarely with regard to additional measures, the Working Group found itself in an impasse. At the same time, we have enlarged the discussions in a number of other areas such as instrumentation, confidentiality, inspection protocols, model facility attachments, etc. A number of national trial inspections have been carried out which confirm that the existing verification system developed in the draft convention is sound and reliable. All these are subjects that would help in the smooth implementation of the CW convention, but, before that, we have to ensure that we have a convention.

I do not think that it is possible to maintain the momentum in the negotiations indefinitely. We cannot let ourselves be bogged down in protracted discussions of certain details at this stage. As Ambassador von Stülpnagel reminded us, we must "make use of the 'window of opportunity' provided by the historic situation we find ourselves in". We must recognize that time is running out and accept the political fact that the only way to free mankind from all chemical weapons for all time is the conclusion of a comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention which ensures that all existing chemical weapon stocks and chemical weapon production facilities are eliminated and that the further development, production, acquisition, transfer and use of these weapons is prohibited. Interim measures designed to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons, apart from not being effective, also run the risk of opening up a parallel track which could easily derail ongoing negotiations and confuse the objective we are working towards. Political reality dictates that the risk does not come from the possible use of chemical weapons but from the existence of chemical weapons, and the only way to address this political reality is to find a politically viable solution. A comprehensive solution is the only viable political solution. If we want a convention that will enjoy universal adherence, then we must work on a convention that will attract universal adherence. This requires the convention to be non-discriminatory and provide for equal rights and obligations of all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons and whether or not they have a large chemical industry. It implies that the convention must contain an effective system of verification that reassures all States parties about compliance. It implies that the Convention must ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes, and that the Convention must not hinder or impede international co-operation in peaceful areas of chemical industry development. These are some of the principles which need to be observed and safeguarded if we want to develop a convention which is universal and comprehensive.