

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

speaking for themselves. They underline the urgency of the matter. Chemical weapons not only present a grave potential risk, they actually represent an atrocious reality. We note with deep concern the reports on the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish population. We do not know the extent to which these weapons have been used, but such use, if true, is abhorrent.

After the many reports on the issue, there may be a tendency in public opinion to accept the use of chemical weapons almost as a kind of routine matter; not as a man-made disaster, but as a nature-made accident. Let me state emphatically that we consider the continuous violation of the letter and spirit of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 an inadmissible offence against international law and humanity which must be strongly condemned by the world community. Such violations must be stopped for ever. The world community must stand united here and work through appropriate channels, including the Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and elsewhere, to apply the strongest pressure possible to stop this crime.

In the complex negotiations on a convention banning chemical weapons we have made progress on a number of issues this year. Many problems remain, some of a more technical character, some of much wider scope, touching on security concerns, inter alia during the 10-year transitional period. These problems need to be fully discussed. But for the Netherlands the basic scope of the treaty on which we have been working for such a long time is clear. Under the convention all production of chemical weapons by parties will be forbidden, and the destruction and complete elimination of stocks and production facilities must take effect within a 10-year period.

Some remarks have been made recently about the amount of detail which has to be worked out before the convention is ready for signature. There is no doubt that the provisions of the convention must be crystal clear before we enter into far-reaching commitments, which, by the way, also have to be translated into national legislation. But every time we dig into the details, we must ask ourselves whether the common sense of the Director-General of the future secretariat, where necessary under the guidance of the executive council or the conference of States parties, would not enable him to cross bridges when these are reached. We cannot foresee all situations that may occur.

Notwithstanding the many points that still have to be worked out, the "rolling text" of the draft treaty is shaping up. There is growing consensus on the main orientations of its provisions. However, this is not yet the case with article VI, on the régime necessary to verify that permitted capabilities are not used for forbidden purposes. We trust that the national trial inspections to be conducted by a number of countries will help to solve some problems, in particular concerning schedule [2] facilities. You may be aware that the Netherlands held such a trial inspection two years ago. We are at present looking into the possibility of additional activities in this field.

Some major conceptual problems remain, however, in the context of article VI. I note the very interesting idea of so-called ad hoc checks, which may present a solution to deter illegal production in facilities capable of producing chemicals relevant to the convention but not falling under