

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet delegation has distributed the text of these "Basic provisions" as an official document of the Committee on Disarmament and also of its Working Group on Chemical Weapons (document CD/294/CD/WP.55). Today we wish formally to introduce this document.

The Soviet document was prepared taking into account the results of the Soviet-American bilateral negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons between 1976 and 1980 and of the negotiations that took place in the Committee on Disarmament during that same period and subsequently. While it naturally reflects the Soviet position on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons, it incorporates many valuable and sound proposals of other States and with respect to a number of the most important aspects it takes into account the positions of our negotiating partners.

If the essence of the Soviet document were to be summarized in a few words, it could be said that what it amounts to is a translation into the language of the provisions of a convention of the desire of the USSR to achieve the speediest possible prohibition of chemical weapons and so far as possible to remove the obstacles to the adoption of a convention by putting forward for consideration on the really crucial, and I repeat crucial, but controversial aspects of the convention, flexible solutions which take account of the various points of view and, we believe, make it possible to reconcile them.

Allow me to go into the Soviet document in somewhat greater detail. First of all I should like to emphasize that this is not a comprehensive text of a future convention, but rather its basic provisions. In other words, the Soviet draft offers possible formulations or what appear to us to be mutually acceptable approaches to the formulation of the principal provisions of the future convention. It is not designed to provide answers to many questions concerning details of the future convention. It aims primarily at helping to resolve key issues -- the scope of the prohibition, confidence-building measures, verification of compliance and other questions. Unfortunately, as you all know, there has not up to now been any general agreement on these. It seems to us that the draft text we have submitted provides a basis for the achievement of consensus precisely on the key aspects of the convention.

I would remind you that the Soviet draft proposes that the future convention should consist of four main sections -- on the scope of the prohibition, declarations and confidence-building measures, ensuring compliance with the convention and the concluding provisions of the convention. Allow me now to touch upon some matters relating to the various sections of the Soviet draft.

I shall not enumerate them, for they are probably well known, the more so since, as I have already said, in many cases they reflect a common standpoint -- they reflect the positions of the Soviet-American joint proposal. It was no surprise to us, therefore, that the statement by the United States delegation indicated certain positions which are in fact also reflected in the Soviet draft basic provisions. What is there to say about the scope of the prohibition? What do we want to emphasize in this section of the future convention?