

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

There is one more issue that I would like to discuss today, namely longstanding problems of "old" or "abandoned" chemical weapons. This issue is not now a major obstacle to completing the convention. If it can be resolved promptly it will not become one. However, we must come to grips with it. We recognize that this issue reflects a number of different problems, all of them politically sensitive. Concern has been expressed, for example, about negative public reaction to labelling such "chemical weapons" in the convention. The term "chemical weapons" has a powerful emotional and political impact and there is a risk of public misunderstanding. For this reason, we believe it would be useful to explore the possibility of a differentiated approach to the required declarations. This would ensure that the differing situations are not lumped together under the single heading of "chemical weapons".

Another concern is over the responsibility for destruction when chemical weapons produced by one State are found on the territory of another State. It would be best for such matters to be settled between the two States involved. In any case, we cannot afford to have a loophole allowing a State party to retain chemical weapons on its territory if not removed or destroyed by the State owning them.

Unfortunately, much of the discussion on these issues has taken place without adequate information. I propose to you that the Conference can no longer work on the basis of rumours and corridor conversations. We urge the Governments that have problems with old and abandoned chemical weapons to provide technical information on the nature of the problems that exist. This could be done, for example, during the meeting of destruction experts that will be held this fall. We believe that such information would not only help to clarify the situation, but also would facilitate cooperative efforts to ensure that the weapons are disposed of safely. In this connection, I would like to recall the offer of the United States to provide technical assistance for destruction of chemical weapons to any State faced with this problem.

On the subject of adequate information, a number of participants in the negotiations have not yet indicated whether or not they possess chemical weapons. We call on them to do so, in order that members of the conference can make an accurate assessment of the dimensions of the chemical weapons problem.

I would now like to review where we are at this stage in the CW negotiations. As I mentioned earlier, many of the issues on which we have made progress this summer were reflected in the CW Ad Hoc Committee Chairman's paper last spring as the key issues requiring political attention and which might ultimately be elements of a possible package. Earlier this summer the United States made substantial moves on many of these key issues, particularly on the questions of right of retaliation, and on our two per cent proposal to achieve universality, and also on articles X and XI. Additionally we have introduced provisions for challenge inspection and we stand ready to discuss the executive council and the issue of costs. In light of these steps, I