

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Chemical weapons form an area where we have seen progress and a display of political will which somehow should also spread to other items of our agenda. Consequently we are happy to note the progress made during 1989 and at the beginning of this year in the negotiations in the Ad hoc Committee. The intensification of efforts in the Committee under the skilful leadership of Ambassador Morel led to progress in overcoming some of the existing difficulties. We would like to thank Ambassador Morel for the work that he accomplished, and to express our satisfaction at the results achieved. Now we see with pleasure that a representative of the Group of 21 is chairing the Ad hoc Committee for this year - Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, to whom we offer our full co-operation.

One of the sectors which is worth highlighting is that of verification, with the preparation of a text on inspection procedures that is now serving as a basis for continued consideration of this point. Another of the areas in which progress has been made is that of technical aspects, in the areas of definitions, schedules of chemical substances and review arrangements, the declaration and verification régime, and soon. Unfortunately in the Committee progress has not been made to the same extent in the consideration of other important items, some of them of a political nature, such as those concerning assistance, economic and technological development, sanctions and the aspect relating to reservations. The intensive consultations held on two important issues - article IX, on challenge inspections, and the issue relating to the composition of the Executive Council - led to better understanding of the subject, although major differences still persist. We do not undervalue the improvements made in the mandate of the Committee for this session, but we are concerned that it contains no reference to the question of the prohibition of use. This is a point that deserves special attention.

As the negotiations proceed in the Committee, it becomes increasingly desirable to examine the question of the financial implications that will arise under the future convention on chemical weapons. Venezuela has placed on record its concern at the size and complexity of the organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons which is being outlined within the context of the convention, especially because of the financial burden that its operations would impose on the States parties to the instrument. There is a need for a clear definition of the principles that will serve as the basis for apportioning the cost of the functioning and the operation of the organization. The Ad hoc Committee should examine this matter carefully. We think it appropriate to reiterate the message of the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference.