

(Mr. Fields, United States)

In our view, the following should be subject to appropriate forms of systematic international on-site inspection on an agreed basis:

Declared chemical weapon stockpiles and the process of their elimination;

Declared chemical weapons production and filling facilities and the process of their elimination;

Declared facilities for permitted production of chemicals which pose a particular risk.

To avoid misunderstanding, I want to emphasize that we do not believe it necessary to subject the entire chemical industry of States to inspection, nor do we seek to have inspectors roam throughout the territory of a party. Systematic international on-site inspection is necessary only at a limited and carefully-defined group of facilities, which must be declared.

An effective mechanism for dealing with compliance issues is essential. This is one of the key lessons to be drawn from the compliance problems encountered in recent years with respect to the Geneva Protocol and the biological and toxin weapons Convention. My delegation believes that the mechanism must promote prompt resolution of issues at the lowest possible political level. At the same time it must be flexible, and allow issues to be taken to higher levels, including the Security Council, whenever that may be necessary. We believe that States must undertake a strong commitment to co-operate in resolving compliance issues. This should include a stringent obligation to permit inspections on a challenge basis.

The United States delegation is putting forward this document to help advance the work of the Committee. We believe that the verification approach it described is tough but fair and practical. I want to emphasize that we are not seeking absolute verification. We recognize that some risks will have to be accepted. However, we do insist that these risks be minimized in order to safeguard our security and that of all other countries. We must have a level of verification which meets that objective.

I want also to emphasize that we are continuing to explore possibilities for new and more effective means of verification, for example, possible use of on-site sensors. We have invited others to join us in a co-operative evaluation of such sensors. I wish to reaffirm that invitation. Furthermore, we are prepared to explore seriously any suggestions by others for achieving an effective level of verification. Our views are subject to modification and further refinement. In fact, we encourage constructive comments and contributions