

(Mr. van SCHAIK, Netherlands)

More complex, however, is the question under what conditions a diversion of certain chemical warfare agents outside the supertoxic range can be accepted for permitted purposes. On this the representative of France, Mr. Montassier, made some pertinent remarks. Two types of approach to this issue are under discussion. The regime for diversion could be generally applicable to all non-supertoxic agents, in which case the quantities involved and the operations carried out would be declared and verified in accordance with the relevant regime to verify non-production. Alternatively, diversion should rather be treated as an exception and be verified according to the arrangements applicable to the verification of destruction of the same agents.

We believe that already for economic reasons (high costs) diversion to civilian purposes will remain an exception. We suggest that a specific regime should be established by the relevant States possessing chemical weapons for categories of specific agents for which diversion could exceptionally be envisaged. In our view a stricter regime would apply to agents that pose the greater risk, also in the manner in which they are stored, in other words, those placed in munitions. Agents in bulk pose the same risk, irrespective of their ultimate purpose. In that case the same verification regime could apply, namely the less strict regime for the verification of non-production.

Besides the stocks of chemical weapons, the capacity to produce chemical weapons poses a major risk. The significance of the destruction of stockpiles would severely be reduced if readily available production capacities are left untouched. Therefore, destruction of stockpiles should be seen in combination with measures to prevent production.

We believe we all share the view that facilities for the production of chemical weapons should be closed down and eliminated after entry into force of the Convention. A list of specific types of facilities should be drawn up including indications of the modalities of elimination that seem to be appropriate for each type of facility (e.g. total physical destruction, partial physical destruction, re-use of components for permitted purposes etc.). In this context the feasibility of temporary conversion of production facilities into destruction facilities could and should be further studied.

There is still a lot of work to be done in this field and abundant material to be investigated without delay. It cannot be denied, of course, that progress in other fields of the Convention which I addressed before will foster a favourable climate for progress on the question of production facilities. However, we would have serious objections to the suggestion of postponing the consideration of the facilities issue, pending progress to be made in other fields, which, if I understood him well, was Ambassador Turbanski's suggestion. Linkages of this sort could only delay the ultimate outcome.

For the effective elimination of chemical-weapon production facilities, a solution must also be found for the sizeable problem of the residual capacity to produce chemical warfare agents in the civilian chemical industry. The spread of advanced chemical and pharmaceutical industries to the developing countries points to the truly global nature of that problem. We believe that the size of the problem may make it very difficult to enter into elaborate verification arrangements on a continuous or semi-continuous basis. The competitive nature of the chemical and