

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

My delegation has repeatedly used this tribune to document its particular interest in the early conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons. The exposed situation of my country on the dividing line between contrasting political, social and military systems explains the apprehension which the possible use of chemical weapons evokes. In the Federal Republic of Germany, therefore, chemical weapons are a subject of extensive and serious public discussion. In addition, the Government has been exposed to several comprehensive parliamentary questions on this topic. I would venture to say that there is hardly a country represented in this Committee which is at present conducting a comparable broad public discussion on this particularly barbarous weapons category.

You all know that, as long ago as 1954, the Federal Republic of Germany renounced the production of chemical weapons in an international Treaty and admitted international controls verifying the non-production of such weapons on its territory. It is therefore a matter of logic and continuity that we should strive with singular fervour for a universal, comprehensive and adequately verifiable prohibition of all chemical weapons. In the view of my Government, the conclusion of a chemical weapons ban is a matter of extreme urgency.

If we look back upon the long, difficult negotiating years, and especially to the past annual session, we cannot but be struck by the blatant contradiction between the declared will of delegations from all political quarters to arrive at the early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention, and the relatively minor degree of practical movement in terms of real progress. At the beginning of the session, my delegation nourished the hope that negotiations would bring a breakthrough and that we would be able to present to our public at home concrete results or at least some tangible momentum. In reality, partial agreement in areas of rather peripheral significance is all that we can show. It is a painful insight in this last month of our annual work that the breakthrough has not materialized. This evaluation of our present annual work is particularly disappointing since the preconditions for progress were uniquely present.

Firstly, the Committee on Disarmament had found in Ambassador McPhail a Chairman who has untiringly worked for the further progress of our negotiations, aided by his dynamic personality, his professional competence and a singular degree of commitment. The same can be said of the chairmen of our contact groups, our colleagues Mr. Cialowicz, Mr. Duarte, Mr. Akkerman and Mr. Lundin.

Secondly, the Committee has at its disposal a valuable and detailed array of documentation, providing a comprehensive basis for further negotiations. I would like to cite in particular the comprehensive United States working paper, document CD/343, the Soviet "Basic provisions" as contained in document CD/294 and, as an important background paper, the USSR/United States joint report dated July 1980; the United Kingdom paper concerning verification of non-production, document CD/353, and finally, our own national contributions on issues of verification, documents CD/265 and CD/326. Fundamentally, there is no important part of the future chemical weapons convention which has not been dealt with extensively in the existing working papers. In a different context I have concluded from this state of affairs that the time for additional national papers is now over and that the legitimate quest for profile by various individual delegations should now be replaced by a common effort to register tangible progress at the common negotiating table.