

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

... As the formal session for 1991 draws to a close, the negotiations in the chemical weapons Committee are becoming more concrete in keeping with the time-frames and objectives we have set, in particular as the change in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee, following the new impetus given to the negotiations as a result of President Bush's initiative, stipulated that next year we should conclude our already excessively prolonged work. Deadlines are approaching, and inevitably we have to tackle the most difficult questions, those which in the final analysis reflect our interest in the instrument designed to ban chemical weapons for ever. Now that the problem of the destruction of existing stockpiles has been resolved, and the issue of a ban on use has been directly and unequivocally included in the text of the convention, some questions of major importance still remain to be solved. This morning I will refer to some of them.

Allow me briefly to recall that in a previous statement, my delegation had occasion to express one or two ideas concerning the verification system for the chemical industry under article VI. At that time we tried to draw attention to the need for negotiating efforts to be directed towards a simpler formulation of the verification mechanism which at the same time would provide a credible guarantee that the provisions of the convention with respect to non-military activities in the chemical field would be duly complied with. We believe that the exercise that has been going on both in Group B as well as in the consultations led by France as a Friend of the Chair have to a large extent followed this thrust. But we think that further efforts could certainly be made to simplify the verification system under article VI, which should be focused on actual production of chemicals and production capacity, and not on the material flow or balance of chemicals, which, as much experience - including not a few national trial inspections - has shown, is not sufficiently accurate to support the conclusion that the convention is not being breached through the transfer of chemicals.

This brief initial digression serves to remind you of what, in the view of my delegation, should be the dominant guiding principle regarding inspections under article VI. On this same issue of verification of the chemical industry I think it is important to point out that the recent meeting at which representatives of the world chemical industry exchanged views with the members of the Committee confirmed the impression shared by many delegations involved in the negotiations that the verification system must be open and simple and must take account in a very special way of the principle

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