

stem from the super-toxic character of the agents themselves, which necessitates complex safety arrangements. In addition, chemical munitions, once they have been made, are not difficult to conceal, because they can only be conclusively distinguished from other munitions by close inspection. In order, therefore, to give assurance that a chemical weapons ban is not being evaded by the clandestine manufacture of chemical weapons and chemical warfare agents, or by retention of undeclared stocks, it will be necessary to embody in the convention a number of mutually reinforcing verification methods on lines that have been already indicated. It will be necessary to build up confidence in the convention by all possible means if it is to command wide acceptance.

In this connection, my delegation welcomes the tabling by the distinguished representative of Finland of document CD/505, the latest in the series of blue books embodying the results of the research of Professor Miettinen and his collaborators on scientific methods for the verification of chemical disarmament. This valuable contribution, which represents the fruits of 10 years of research, provides the Conference at an opportune moment with a comprehensive picture of the techniques available as a result of the latest scientific advances. The instrumental methods they have developed could play a valuable part in reducing the need for the presence of inspectors on the ground. It should be our aim to make use of instrumental methods where appropriate, both for reasons of economy, and to reduce the intrusiveness of verification. The physical presence of inspectors will, of course, still be needed to maintain the instruments, as well as for the on-site inspections which will be required to ensure compliance with the convention.

One essential element in the verification regime must be provision for challenge by a party which is not satisfied that another party is fulfilling its obligations under the convention. The views of the United Kingdom Government on this subject were set out in detail in Working Paper CD/431 which was introduced on 14 February this year by Mr. Luce, Minister of States for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The system of challenge leading to on-site inspection provides the ultimate assurance that States parties will not be able with impunity to evade their obligations under it. It would be essential that any suspicions of non-compliance should be rapidly and conclusively allayed. This challenge system would apply to all aspects of the convention and would thus provide its safety net. It is however important to the stability of the convention that assurance of compliance should be based as far as possible on routine methods of verification, which involve no suspicion, and do not therefore weaken the convention; and that too much weight should not be put on the safety net provided by challenge verification.

The first type of measure of routine verification in point of time must be the verification of destruction of existing stocks of chemical weapons. In this field the conference has made some progress. Members of the conference had a welcome opportunity to see on the ground how chemical weapons can be completely and safely destroyed at two workshops organized by the United States Government at Tooele last year and by the Federal German Government this year at Munster. My delegation is grateful to the host governments for an opportunity to see these plants at work, and, in particular, for the way in which it was made clear that the destruction can be carried out in a manner that lends itself to verification, by impartial observers, that the declared stocks have indeed been destroyed. I think that it was clear to all of us who visited the plants that it would be necessary to have observers on the spot throughout the period of destruction at the site chosen for the purpose. The statement on 21 February by the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union that his Government would in principle be prepared to accept the continuous presence of observers on site while chemical weapons were being destroyed gives grounds for hope that this aspect of the problem will be soluable.