

(Mr. Kahiluoto, Finland)

In the 1985 report, attention was turned to air monitoring of chemical warfare agents. The report describes in detail various techniques for collecting and analysing low-volume, medium-volume and high-volume air samples. The two latest reports describe how these techniques were tested in practice by means of large-scale field experiments. Kilogram amounts of harmless simulants of warfare agents were released into the atmosphere as finely dispersed aerosols. Air samples were then collected as far away as 200 kilometres downwind. At all distances, all the simulants released could be detected and identified.

This is significant in two ways. First, the experiments prove that the techniques developed really work in actual field conditions and are highly selective and sensitive. Second, the experiments prove that even very small releases of chemical warfare agents can be discovered at great distances if a network of detection stations is available.

While verification of compliance with the convention will be primarily based on data reporting and inspections, it is, in our view, important to have available, as a complement, methods which can reliably detect and identify atmospheric releases of chemical agents regardless of source.

Since air monitoring facilities are also needed for surveillance of ambient air for reasons of environmental protection, it would not, in our view, be necessary to establish a monitoring network solely for the purpose of chemical weapons verification provided that the facilities are designed with both purposes in mind. We will shortly present a working paper to this Conference on this aspect of air monitoring.

Another important subject recently addressed by the Finnish Project on Verification of Chemical Disarmament is automatic monitoring. In February this year, the project organized a workshop in Helsinki for the purpose of studying the potential applications of automatic monitoring systems in the context of verifying a chemical weapons convention. Twenty-odd qualified experts from a number of countries involved with the chemical weapons negotiations participated. The proceedings of the workshop have just been circulated to the Conference on Disarmament as document CD/765. They were introduced in the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons last Friday.

We in Finland appreciate the work done on various aspects of arms control verification in many countries, members and non-members of the CD alike. We have followed with interest the Norwegian research programme of verification of alleged use of chemical weapons since it was initiated in 1981. We are also aware of the important work on this and other subjects of verification carried out by Canada.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Canada and Norway for the valuable meetings they organized for our benefit among others, in the month of May. We found the Outer Space Workshop in Montreal as well as the Oslo Symposium on the Chemical Weapons Convention most informative on the issues concerned.