

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

In such an attempt to go back to the starting point of our work, I should like to make some remarks which present my delegation's perception of the major elements of this convention.

What is to be prohibited in the Convention? This, obviously is related to the basic objectives of the convention and we think that sufficient work has been accumulated to make it possible at this stage to clarify those areas where there has been basic agreement. An important point is how to express the prohibition on use, including its relationship with the earlier Geneva Protocol on the subject. In this respect, I wish to make two points.

Firstly, it would seem possible clearly to affirm the continuing validity of the 1925 Geneva Protocol by providing for a confirmatory clause in either the preambular or operative part of the convention to the effect that nothing in the present Convention shall be understood or interpreted to imply a limitation or reduction of the obligations undertaken by States under the said Protocol.

Secondly, though there have been a number of proposals for the appropriate expression with regard to the prohibition on use, my delegation feels that we should first try to reach clear agreement to provide for a clause in the convention along the lines such as is being contemplated now; namely, that "Each State Party undertakes not to use chemical weapons". Discussions on whether or not the right of reprisal should be clearly spelled out and on other related matters could be left to a meeting of legal experts to be called at some later date to draft the details.

Next, I would like to look at how we are to define chemical weapons. My country would consider it to be most desirable if chemicals used exclusively for weapons purposes were to be identified and listed together with related munitions as substances to be prohibited under this convention. For the purpose of declaration, elimination and other controls, it is essential to start with a clearly defined list of chemicals. However, if it were to prove difficult to achieve general consensus on this approach, we consider it inevitable to follow the present understanding and rely on the general-purpose criteria for defining chemical weapons. A certain difficulty accompanies this latter approach because a definition in this manner depends on a set of criteria for achievement of objectivity of judgement.

I have already pointed out, particularly during my intervention at a plenary in July 1983, that a definition on the basis of general-purpose criteria may call for a very difficult verification of the specific "intent" in regard to the material in question. It means that great care should be exercised so that an undue burden will not fall upon normal industrial activities through the process of inquiry into the reasons why various activities are conducted in chemical industries. We deem it necessary to include an explicit provision in recognition of this danger in the operative or preambular part of the convention, and intend to present our ideas in more definite form to the Ad Hoc Committee in due course.

Next, the declaration and elimination of chemical weapons and their production facilities. Various proposals have been put forward concerning the timing and content of the declaration, as well as the time-limit and methods for elimination. My delegation believes that declaration and elimination together form the most important part of the convention, and, therefore, that the relevant provisions should be as detailed and definitive as possible.