

(Mr. de Souza e Silva, Brazil)

the wording of our reports as if they were legally binding treaties. Perhaps this is simply in response to a psychological mechanism of compensation, of which we are quite aware. Such decisions cannot be construed as engaging Governments to the result of the work undertaken, and they certainly do not create any final commitments. The work of this Committee on chemical weapons is a case in point, and I do not need to recall here that no delegation around this table feels engaged by the significant results achieved in this field so far, although we may all agree that substantive progress has been made in this session towards facilitating agreement. In this Committee, agreements are usually reached at working group level, before being formally approved at the Committee level, where consensus is also necessary; in any case, ample allowance is made for reservations. Further on, the texts submitted by the Committee on Disarmament are reviewed by the General Assembly, and if adopted, they are presented to Governments as mere recommendations. The final judgement on whether or not to join an agreement will necessarily be made, in the last instance, by the sovereign decision of the Government itself; and even the executive decision to sign an international instrument must be confirmed, in most constitutional processes, by the procedures of ratification, which usually involve national exposure of the issues to the judgement of public opinion. It is thus difficult to understand, for instance, why China and France decided on a negative attitude as regards their participation in the Working Group on a Nuclear Test-Ban.

One is forced, therefore, to ask the inevitable question: why do some delegations in this Committee persist in raising obstacles to the normal performance of its negotiating function, as if every procedural, or even substantive step would entail irrevocable commitments of a political and legal nature?

The Governments of nations where public opinion plays a role in the conduct of international affairs may overemphasize issues relating to their defence and security needs in response only to the perspective of their own national interests; conversely, Governments of nations where public opinion is not a relevant factor may deliberately engage in rhetoric with the aim of promoting dissension among their adversaries. Both attitudes, when used to impede progress in this Committee, become extremely harmful to the orderly conduct of work, since both are at variance with the decision-making process inherent in multilateral procedure. Such ambiguity of attitudes and behaviour could perhaps be dispelled if all delegations represented here attached the same meaning and value to the expression "in good faith".

I wish to thank the distinguished Ambassador of the United States, Mr. Fields, for his reaction to the observation of my delegation, as well as of other delegations, concerning the compliance of his Government with a partial test-ban treaty. Unfortunately, my delegation is not yet convinced by his arguments, neither those of a juridical nor those of a political nature. But my delegation was happy to hear from the distinguished Ambassador of the United States the renewed commitment of his Government to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and I would like to state that all doubts on the part of my delegation on this matter will be dispelled when the United States delegation decides to engage in meaningful and substantive negotiations on a total ban on nuclear-weapon test explosions.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Argentina, Mr. García Moritan, to whom I now give the floor.