

(Mr. El Reedy, Egypt)

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons has covered a considerable amount of ground. When it resumed its meetings last month, it was able to achieve some progress. It conducted intensive technical consultations in which two experts from Egypt, namely, General Ezmat Ezz and General Said Sultan, took part. General Ezz presided over a small contact group entrusted with the task of drawing up a list of precursors and key precursors. Although this contact group did excellent work and achieved considerable progress, it was unable to submit a report, or even to record the proceedings. This is most regrettable since, as members of this Committee, we have so often been given advice on the usefulness of the participation of experts from national capitals, the importance of their being representative of all geographical regions, and the need for such experts to work in accordance with the customary procedures of the Committee and in a spirit of mutual respect.

A few days ago our Committee received the proposals mentioned by Vice-President George Bush in his statement. We heard them presented by our colleague Ambassador Louis Fields. Last summer we also received Soviet proposals on basic provisions for a chemical weapons convention. We believe that all of this constitutes a development of paramount importance which should enable the Committee to proceed in an efficient manner towards the drafting of a chemical weapons convention.

At the outset, we wish to emphasize that such a convention should provide for an effective system of verification. As a developing country, we regard international verification as indispensable.

We also attach the greatest importance to provisions that would deter any party from violating the Convention. Provision should also be made to ensure a collective response by States parties to the Convention in the event of any violation.