

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

The patient efforts of the Chairmen of the Working Groups -- Mr. Poptchev of Bulgaria, Mrs. Bonnier of Sweden, and Mr. Elbe of the Federal Republic of Germany -- are also to be commended.

In my statement on 23 July, I registered my delegation's disappointment that the amount of progress had not been satisfactory in the chemical weapons negotiations. During the past four weeks, we have seen some new movement and have noted some additional progress. On balance, we continue to believe the negotiations are moving far too slowly. Unfortunately, the continuing spread and use of chemical weapons has not yet imparted a greater sense of urgency to our work. My delegation is fully committed to making every effort to conclude our negotiations for an effective, verifiable chemical weapons ban at the earliest possible moment, and urges all other delegations to join us in this task.

There is no question that a Chemical Weapons Convention must encompass all chemical weapons, including binary weapons. As I said in my statement on 23 July, the clear preference of the American people is to ban rather than to build chemical weapons and my delegation has sought to ensure that appropriate régimes are devised to accomplish that goal. In article VI of the new draft text established in the Committee's report, both the United States and the Soviet Union have taken a step toward the development of the régimes that will effectively deal with all classes of toxic chemicals. We note that both the United States and the Soviet Union have now agreed to ban the production in civilian industry of chemicals in the category that can be used as supertoxic lethal chemical weapons or key precursors of binary weapons. We should now expand our efforts to find mutually acceptable ways to identify which chemicals would fall under the various régimes envisioned.

While substantial areas of disagreement remain, we hope that further intensive work in the area of permitted activities during the intersessional period will yield rapid and positive results in both clarifying and resolving differences.

We also note the progress made, Mr. President, on the subject of declarations of chemical weapons and on outlining the form of a future agreement on production facilities. However, the Committee has not yet agreed on the timing of the declaration of stockpile locations, nor has it yet developed a régime that would permit diversion to peaceful purposes under effective verification.

In order to move the negotiations along in the area of elimination of production facilities, my delegation has introduced at the working level an approach that may help us past the current impasse over definitions. We hope that this approach, which provides for the sequential examination of different types of facilities, will be a useful way to move ahead in an area that has been deadlocked too long.

Another key area, clearly, is that of challenge inspection. The need for mandatory, short-notice challenge-inspection provisions to complement the routine verification provisions of the convention is basic. Again, as my delegation has made clear in the past, it is a question of the level of verification required to satisfy security concerns, not specific language, that is important. I hope that next year our work will be furthered through the development of a mutually acceptable framework as a basis for coming to terms with the requirements in this area.