

(Mr. Johanes, Czechoslovakia)

We have also adopted legislation limiting exports of certain types of chemicals. I wish to emphasize here that this measure is not meant to discriminate against anybody and does not impede further co-operation in the peaceful development of the chemical industry. Its only aim is to prevent misuse for military purposes of chemical products destined for use in civilian industry. We expect that the future convention will settle the question of the non-proliferation of chemical weapons so that these partial measures will lose their significance.

I can inform you today that Czechoslovakia is taking the following steps towards the speedy prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. Firstly, within the framework of the multilateral exchange of information relating to the drafting of the convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons we are making public, in an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, all the principal relevant data on our chemical potential. I wish to reaffirm once again that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic neither possesses nor produces any chemical weapons, nor are there any such weapons on our territory. All the research and laboratory work being carried out is exclusively connected with protection against the effects of chemical weapons and is pursued for peaceful objectives.

Secondly, we are ready to receive a team of foreign inspectors within the framework of the international trial verification of non-production of chemical weapons in civilian chemical industry. The check will be carried out at a chemical plant at Mnisek near Liberec, where the national experiment has already taken place. We expect that the rules for the international phase of the experiment will be agreed upon very shortly.

Thirdly, Czechoslovakia will make available for use by the verification bodies to be established under the convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons a special laboratory designed for analysis of samples and testing of the toxic effects of new chemicals. The laboratory will be equipped to handle all highly toxic substances, including those falling in schedule I.

We hope that this contribution on our part, our openness and efforts to promote the speedy achievement of mutually acceptable compromises, will prompt similar steps on the part of other States. In this spirit, we intend to make our contribution to the success of the international conference which will take place in Canberra this coming September.

We remain convinced that partial, regional measures, too, can play an important role in the efforts aimed at limiting, banning and eliminating chemical weapons. That is why between 1985 and 1988 we and the German Democratic Republic put forward a series of constructive proposals for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. If they meet with a positive response, we might conduct a practical test in that sensitive part of the world of certain measures proposed in the convention, including verification. From this point of view, we continue to consider our initiative as timely. The creation of such a zone would make a substantial contribution towards lowering the level of military confrontation in Europe.