

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

My plea today for a comprehensive global convention banning chemical weapons is prompted by my Government's concern not to miss a historic opportunity. The Paris Conference called for a redoubling of our efforts at the negotiating table here in Geneva. Despite the tight schedule of our meetings and the increased pace of our negotiations, I cannot but observe that we have so far failed to turn the impetus given by the Paris Conference into the urgently needed progress on the crucial issues of our negotiations.

Let me try to illustrate this point. The verification of compliance with the provisions of the convention we are endeavouring to achieve is one of the crucial aspects of our negotiations. From the outset we knew that it would be one of the most difficult issues to resolve. We welcomed the progress which has been achieved on this problem over the last few years. We now have a verification system, the elements of which have already been largely developed. Yet I get the impression that some delegations are still hesitant to commit themselves. Challenge inspections must - and all delegations seem to agree on that - be considered a corner-stone of the whole verification system, as they constitute an all-embracing measure enabling all States parties to clarify doubts about compliance. The concept of this measure has been under discussion for several years. Yet views still seem to diverge on the specific modalities of this measure. However, these differences are, in my opinion, by no means insurmountable. Rather, I am under the impression that their significance is sometimes overestimated. It should be possible to achieve concrete results which would be reflected in the "rolling text" by the end of this session. A text on challenge inspections in appendix I completing the existing draft of article IX would be a manifestation of our common resolve. Such a result would also provide the necessary basis to complete the verification system. It would be understood as a long-needed signal which could also stimulate work on other parts of the convention.

The numerous national trial inspections which have been conducted over the past few months bear witness to the fact that we are on the right track. The report on the British trial challenge inspections confirms this notion. It should provide a very useful input on the further discussions, in particular on inspection procedures. A review of the reports on national trial inspections in chemical industry facilities demonstrates that article VI and its annexes provide a sound basis for the verification of non-production. The valuable experience gained in these trials should have a reassuring effect and enable us to put the finishing touches to the verification régimes of article VI.

The extensive discussions on the need for additional verification measures in the convention have as yet not been conclusive. At the beginning of last year it was my delegation which put forward a proposal for ad hoc checks that are intended to supplement the existing routine measures for the verification of non-production. We proposed this concept in an attempt to meet concerns expressed about the ease with which chemical weapons can be produced clandestinely in the chemical industry. Ad hoc checks are a flexible, easily manageable and unintrusive means of verification which can cover all facilities in the chemical industry capable of producing chemical weapons and deter any production of chemical weapons in them.