

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

We welcome the readiness shown by several countries producing chemicals relevant to the convention to conduct experiments at the national level to test verification procedures under the convention and to pool their experience for evaluation in the Ad hoc Committee. This exercise should be followed by multilateral trial experiments at an early date. We have no doubt that the results of these experiments would be helpful in developing and refining inspection procedures. In this context, I should like to express appreciation for the valuable work done by Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden as Chairman of the open-ended consultations on trial inspections.

My delegation as well as most of the other members of the Group of 21 attach special importance to article XI, concerning economic and technological development. This subject was discussed intensively in Group A, and a text which is very largely free of brackets was evolved. My delegation had expected that, like other texts which have received in-depth consideration and on which a wide measure of agreement has been achieved, the language negotiated on article XI would be placed in appendix I. Regrettably, some delegations have seen fit to oppose its inclusion in the "rolling text" on grounds which we find totally unconvincing.

The agreement reached in Working Group B on a definition of production facilities, on the principle that all such facilities would be destroyed and on the consequent changes in articles II and V of the "rolling text" is one of the major achievements of this year's session. The question of the order of destruction of chemical weapon stocks and production facilities remains a major problem area. As we have said in the past, any concerns about security in the destruction period should be addressed by appropriate adjustments in the order of destruction. The maintenance of secret stocks or continued production during this period would however be in conflict with the basic purposes of the convention.

The importance of article X for a viable convention which ensures undiminished security for all participants can hardly be over-emphasized. It would be unrealistic to imagine that the chemical weapons threat would vanish with the signature or entry into force of the convention. Before becoming a party to it, each State would have to satisfy itself that by doing so it did not become more vulnerable to a chemical weapons attack by a potential adversary. These weapons have in the past been used against those who did not possess the ability to retaliate in kind and to protect themselves against these weapons. With a ban on the production and possession of chemical weapons, the importance of possessing a protective capacity would become even more important for parties to the convention. A sizeable number of countries possess this capability, but a larger number do not. It is, therefore, of vital importance that the convention should contain effective and reliable provisions on assistance in protective measures. It is only in this perspective that this question can realistically be addressed. The issues are not academic or theoretical in character, as one delegation suggested at our last meeting. They have a direct bearing on the national security of many countries and cannot be lightly dismissed.