

(Mr. Rasaputram, Sri Lanka)

We are no doubt closer to agreement on major issues. Nevertheless there are gaps in thinking among groups of countries which can be narrowed down and the different views harmonized through consultation and compromise. The composition of the executive council on an accepted formula will give credibility and strength to the convention as a universal treaty instrument. Frivolous challenge inspections can perhaps be overcome by making the challenger pay for the costly exercise as suggested by Egypt in a recent paper that was circulated. We may even consider that the victim of such frivolous challenge be compensated for the expenditure incurred by opening up its country for total inspection.

The transfer and adoption of technology for peaceful purposes should not pose any problems. Sri Lanka has always taken the view that exports and imports of chemicals for peaceful purposes should not be obstructed. Consideration should also be given to the avoidance of heavy costs in any reporting system that may be adopted. Most importantly civilian industrial activity in developing countries should not be placed in a disadvantageous position by placing heavy burdens of a discriminatory nature. Since non-conformity with the convention will carry heavy penalties it is important to provide those safeguards to developing countries.

The verifications and inspections that have been conducted on an experimental basis at national levels have given us valuable data to verify that substances produced or exported will not be diverted for purposes prohibited by the convention. The practical experience thus gained would be valuable to speed up further work.

Despite the initiatives that have been taken to increase confidence and policy statements made by members as well as the openness of the discussions, we observe that the Ad Hoc Committee is still facing an uphill task particularly to keep a delicate balance between confidence-building and the concern for security. We are however encouraged by the acceleration in the pace of negotiations, and the efforts continued under the able guidance of Ambassador von Wagner to narrow down the divergences in positions and views relating to many important issues in the "rolling text" of the proposed CWC. My delegation wishes to reassure the CD of its fullest cooperation towards the successful conclusion of a non-discriminatory convention embodying a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons.

My delegation is very thankful to the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, for his important presentation today, which will no doubt enhance the quality and the pace of the negotiations on the proposed chemical weapons convention. The document that has been circulated on the Australian initiative is a timely and a constructive contribution to expedite the terminal phase of the negotiations. We note with satisfaction that the Australian text will not be an alternative or run parallel to the "rolling text" which has been evolved after several years of painstaking consultation and compromise. We are confident that it will find a way forward on outstanding issues by building upon a sound basis provided for in the "rolling text". My delegation agrees that this