

(Mr. Lechuga, Cuba)

Another question that is sufficiently ripe for the negotiations to be concluded successfully is the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiled in the various arsenals. Again, there is no reason to extend the negotiations beyond what is necessary, as has been happening. It would be unforgivable to let slip the impetus that now seems to exist and fail to take advantage of this moment to meet yet another aspiration of mankind, which is the elimination of such horrifying weapons. In this connection, the recent Soviet initiative contains a positive factor which opens up the way for concluding the treaty, and it is the question of verification, namely, the proposal for strict control, including on-site inspections. There is no reason not to make rapid headway in the negotiations.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will continue its work without undue delay. It should build further on what was achieved last year and in January of this year under the chairmanship of Ambassador Turbanski of Poland. We note with satisfaction that the atmosphere in the Committee recently improved substantially. This, together with the opening of the bilateral Soviet-American consultations last week, gives us a good negotiating pattern wherein multilateral and bilateral efforts could mutually complement each other. Thus, all constructive proposals could be made use of and lead towards the solution of the remaining problems outstanding.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is, in fact, the only working body of the Conference negotiating on a specific problem of disarmament. It has been working hard during the recent years on the elaboration of a chemical weapons convention and we may say that all delegations are paying special attention to its work. Let us hope that the activity of this Committee would serve us as an example of how we should organize our work also on other priority items. Otherwise, the Conference on Disarmament could soon be associated merely with the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. And we would like to believe that this organ of multilateral negotiations on disarmament would eventually be in a position, and why not this year already, to address other urgent problems too.