

Mr. BEESLEY (Canada): Mr. President, as this is the first opportunity that I have had to take the floor under your presidency, I should like to express, on behalf of Canada, my pleasure and my government's pleasure at seeing you, the distinguished representative of Ethiopia, assuming the important role of President of our Conference for the month of July. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation for the fruitful and constructive work done by your predecessor, Ambassador Alfarargi, to move the work of this Conference forward and, although it may seem a little late to be reiterating something I have said before, I hope that you, like Ambassador Alfarargi, will be able to continue to build upon the extremely useful foundations laid by Ambassador Vejvoda of Czechoslovakia.

The purpose of my statement today is to express the views of the Canadian Government on the current state of our efforts to negotiate a comprehensive, verifiable ban on chemical weapons and to announce our intention to place before this body further results of Canadian research relating to the investigation of allegations of use of chemical weapons. I will also make some brief comments on document CD/766, which proposed an annex to article IX of the draft convention, dealing specifically with procedures for the verification of allegations of use. We have been pleased to join with Norway in tabling this document in the Conference on Disarmament.

The earliest possible conclusion of a comprehensive, adequately verifiable ban on chemical weapons remains one of the priority arms control objectives of the Canadian Government. Such a convention should, in our view, provide for the immediate cessation of all chemical weapons production and for the systematic destruction within a specified period of all existing stocks of chemical weapons. The legitimate concern for security should be addressed in a way which ensures that implementation of the convention will not create any new kinds of imbalance which might undermine the security of any State party. However, the convention must not just constitute an arms limitation measure, but be seen from the outset to be a real disarmament measure, involving the complete elimination of an entire class of weapon of mass destruction.

The successful conclusion of such a convention would make a direct and lasting contribution to international security. It would, moreover, go a long way toward reviving public confidence in the relevance and efficacy of the multilateral arms control process in general and the authority of this negotiating forum in particular. This we see as indispensable to the long-term effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament.

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