

(Mr. van SCHAIK, Netherlands)

However, so far, no agreement has been reached on the time span within which and the schedule according to which, all declared stocks would have to be open for verification.

Ambassador Dhanapala expressed some views on this matter, underlining the need for comprehensive information with regard to the plans for destruction and for a phasing-out scheme that would not prejudice the security of any State party. We agree with him. Indeed, we think that we should seek agreement on a phased scheme for verification of declarations of stocks, to be put on a parallel with a time-table to be agreed upon for the phased destruction of stockpiles. Such time-tables should meet certain criteria, so as to ensure: first, that the most dangerous chemical weapons will be destroyed in the early phase; and second, that each country will gradually and proportionately dispose of its stocks.

In order to meet the first criterion -- most dangerous weapons first -- the toxicity of each category of weapons should be a determinant, while at the same time a distinction must be made between agents placed in weapons and those stored in bulk form. With respect to the latter distinction we agree with the approach chosen by the representative of Australia, Mr. Rowe, on 19 July, when he rightly pointed out that operational weapons must be destroyed first. The operational utility of a chemical agent is greater if weapons have been filled with it and such weapons pose a greater risk than those stored in bulk. Also the percentage which a particular category constitutes of the total over-all stockpile of a State should be taken into account when determining its relative danger.

As to the second criterion -- the proportionate reduction for each party -- this appears to be important, in order to leave to each possessor State a proportional share of its stocks during the interim period. Declarations and verifications should, moreover, in each phase precede destruction. Thus the location of a party's entire chemical-weapon stockpile would not have to be declared at once and would therefore not be exposed to the risk of attack, in case of a breakdown of the convention, unexpected delay in the implementation of its provisions or other unforeseen adverse developments.

In short, we think that we should seek formulas for destruction schemes through which the most dangerous weapons will first be destroyed and which, on the other hand, ensure that the mutual security of possessor States will not be reduced.

Parties should, of course, be assured that declared stockpiles are actually being destroyed. Here again agreement seems to emerge on obtaining such assurance by a combination of permanent on-site inspection by international inspectors during the entire destruction operation and the use of monitoring instruments for the most dangerous chemical weapons. The question remains whether an equally stringent monitoring of chemical weapons in a lower risk category is necessary. We on our side believe that a reasonable solution to that question can be found without too much difficulty.