

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

Pakistan has always supported a comprehensive, effective, verifiable and equitable ban on chemical weapons, and is therefore gratified at the progress which is being made in the negotiations taking place under item 4 of our agenda. At the same time, we also realize that the conclusion of such a convention would not by itself rid the world of the chemical weapons threat. If universal adherence is too ambitious a target to aspire to in the short term, the importance at least of all countries possessing chemical weapons stocks or chemical weapons capabilities becoming parties to the Convention at an early date can hardly be over-emphasized. As long as such countries remain outside the Convention, those which neither possess chemical weapons nor have the intention of acquiring them would continue to feel threatened, and might justifiably be reluctant to assume the obligations of a State party. Unless something is done about this dilemma, a considerable number of the latter category of States may thus not be in a position to adhere to the Convention.

There is another scenario that presents a similar problem. This would arise if a State party acted in violation of its obligations. In such an event, any other State party which felt threatened as a result could feel compelled to withdraw from the Convention in order to acquire a deterrent capability of its own. Such an act could in turn lead to the withdrawal of other States, thus subjecting the chemical weapons prohibition régime to a degree of strain which it might not be able to withstand.

The problems I have just referred to do not admit of any easy solution. Yet we feel that if appropriate provisions are included in the Convention, a lot could be done to enhance incentives for States to adhere to it and to reduce pressures on a State to withdraw from it because it feels threatened by the chemical weapons capability of another State. This could be achieved in two ways: firstly, by assurances that a State party which feels exposed to a chemical weapons threat will be able to count on assistance from other States parties in resisting that threat; and secondly, by effective sanctions against a State which is the source of a chemical weapons threat to other States.

While we recognize that both these ways of approaching the problem -- assistance to the threatened State and sanctions against the State which is the source of the threat -- are in a certain sense interrelated, it is the former, perhaps the less difficult of the two, which is the subject of the proposal made by Pakistan in document CD/752. Article X of the draft Convention already provides us with the necessary framework.

Our proposal is based on the premise that the existence of a chemical weapons threat anywhere in the world would jeopardize the viability of the CW Convention. It should therefore be a matter of concern for all States which have a stake in the preservation of the Convention, and calls for an appropriate response from them in the form of assistance to the threatened State.

If States are assured that by becoming parties to the Convention they would be able to rely on effective assistance from other States parties in the event of a chemical weapons threat, the incentives for adhering to the Convention would be substantially increased. Similarly, if States which have