

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

Thirdly, the demand to proceed with actual drafting work also takes into account the time factor. Each day spent on discussion may only lead us further away from the aim of a convention. While we are spending our time on discussions, a new generation of chemical weapons — the binary weapons — is being introduced into military arsenals. It is likely to give the whole chemical weapons problem a new dimension. This is also a challenge for the Committee, where the tendency can be felt to involve it ever more in a growing tangle of technical material and ideas, sometimes of no or only marginal importance to an international political and legal instrument.

Fourthly, questions which are still open could be overcome in the course of the drafting of the convention, in a serious and systematic negotiating process. To mention only one methodological example, I would like to refer to the personal experience I gathered during the drafting of the ENMOD Convention which took place in the predecessor of this Committee in 1976. This agreement was then drafted within quite a short period of time, during which intensive efforts were undertaken by delegations and all open questions were solved in the course of the negotiating process.

Having stated the case for drafting work one might well ask how this should be done. As far as the negotiating forum is concerned, one possibility could be to use the instrument provided by contact groups in a more systematic way. One could think about setting up such a group for all questions connected with the scope of a future convention. It could also tackle the issues connected with stockpiles and facilities, perhaps even the question of declarations. Another group could deal in a comprehensive way with all verification matters. Thus, we favour an approach which would follow the actual structure of the future convention. We have strong doubts about the usefulness of an approach aiming at a priority discussion of certain activities — stockpile destruction, for instance — and dealing with them in a separate, isolated way. This could perhaps lead to interesting scientific and technical debates, but would obviously lead us away from drafting work on a chemical weapons convention. With regard to the working method, we would prefer the use of brackets. In this way we could proceed on the basis of the structure envisaged for the convention and narrow down differences of opinion concerning questions of detail. This, of course, presupposes a readiness to compromise, to engage in real negotiations.

Sometimes we are told that the main problem of a chemical weapons convention would be that of international verification. We do not overlook the fact that in this field different views still exist. But this is the case with other areas as well, as has been shown by the United States document which I have already mentioned. So, how can one agree to the proposal to negotiate first an acceptable verification and compliance framework before drafting an actual treaty text? This would contravene common practice in international law. Such a position would amount to putting the cart before the horse. It could endlessly postpone actual