

(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

The Working Group will no doubt be obliged simultaneously to give attention to some more technical issues relating to certain aspects of the convention. I am thinking in particular of certain problems concerned primarily with the procedures for verification of compliance with the convention. Useful work was done during the last technical consultations with the participation of experts, especially in the matter of the determining which precursors of chemical warfare agents will call for specific verification procedures during the chemical production process. The same applies to the definition of requirements as regards verification of the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons and the dismantling of facilities. However, it seems to me that it should be clear to everyone that these technical discussions ought to lead to arrangements that can be incorporated in the convention. In other words, we must not lose sight of the ultimate object of such exercises, and see to it that overly technical or academic considerations do not unnecessarily add to the complexity of these talks. It will be necessary, at an appropriate time, to consolidate the elements which have formed the subject of convergencies of views during these consultations into draft annexes to the convention.

While the Working Group continues its efforts -- which we hope will be resumed shortly, for it would be unwise to interrupt the process that is under way -- it would seem to us appropriate to initiate, at the highest level in this Committee, genuine negotiations on the main issues where divergencies of views remain. I think we now know very well what these issues are. I think it would be easier to reconcile the opposing views in small consultation groups. We believe that this is essential to the success of our work.

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(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

My delegation is encouraged by the general agreement that progress can be reached in the field of chemical weapons. We are much encouraged by the remarks on this subject made by Vice-President Bush during his visit to the Committee last week. We support his call for the Committee to begin real negotiations on a chemical weapons convention, and hope that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons can resume its work without delay. We look forward to examining in detail the proposals put forward by the United States delegation when its paper becomes available and hope that it will provide the necessary impetus for rapid progress.

My delegation will make a further statement on this subject in due course, but I should like at this stage to comment briefly on the outcome of the recent consultations on technical issues relating to a chemical weapons convention. My delegation thought that these consultations showed that a measure of agreement was emerging on a number of technical points relating to the definition and identification of key precursors of chemical weapons, and to some of the procedures which might be suitable for verifying the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons. We were therefore disappointed to find that delegations were not able to reach agreement on a way of recording the discussion which had taken place. An oral report by the Chairman, however careful and balanced, cannot really replace an agreed written report.