

(Mr. Morel, France)

the general régime already being developed, and security stocks as such, subject to a specific régime, which would remain unchanged until the end of the eighth year, and would then be destroyed in simultaneous and very carefully defined phases during the two last years of the 10-year period.

These stocks should meet specific criteria, and the following are the main characteristics.

They should be optional: the establishment of a security stock may appear necessary to one party or another to the convention, which might consider at the time the convention enters into force that it needs to ensure security balance vis-à-vis other Powers holding chemical weapons. But it goes without saying that the convention cannot impose this on any party. It is thus an option open to all member States for a period of 10 years, subject to very strict constraints which will be set out in detail later on.

The stocks should be limited; we suggest a level which is very low but still of military significance, that is, in our view, between 1,000 and 2,000 tons. In order for the stocks to remain credible until the last year of the 10-year period, we propose an amount equal to at least twice the minimum volume regarded as militarily significant. The exact level would have to be determined by agreement among the parties before the entry into force of the convention. But at all events the proposed range makes it possible to appreciate the difference between this stockpile and the present capacities of the major Powers, which are measured in tens of thousands of tons on the one side, and hundreds of thousands of tons on the other. This gap on its own is sufficient to show that security stocks can only have a purely defensive role against the possibility of a chemical weapon attack. There is therefore no conflict with the provisions of the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

The stocks should be identical for all parties, that is to say at the same level for all countries, in accordance with the reasons just given above.

The stocks should be homogeneous, in other words made up exclusively of munitions containing V-nerve agents. Monitoring would thus be simplified, but also the inevitable maintenance of protection programmes against an attack by chemical weapons during the 10-year period.

The stocks should be verifiable from the entry into force of the convention right up until complete destruction. This particularly sensitive point will be elaborated on in the second part of this statement.

The stocks should be backed up by a single production facility for the countries that so desire. This provision may be surprising in a prohibition convention, but it meets two considerations which stem from technical constraints on the one hand and respect for the convention on the other.

From the technical point of view, provision should be made for maintaining the security stock in condition or renewing a portion of it over an eight-year period: it is not possible to rule out the possibility of storage accidents, defective munitions or, more generally, the need for maintaining the level of part of the security stock. In a broader context, associating a production facility with the security stock should go a long way