

Mr. von WAGNER (Germany): I take the floor on behalf of the Western Group as their CW Coordinator to express our gratitude through you, Mr. President, to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Serguei Batsanov. He has guided the Ad Hoc Committee with great wisdom, sensitivity and patience, as witnessed by the report we have just adopted.

With the exception of the "challenge" part of article IX, for the first time in CW negotiating history, all the elements of a complete draft convention are on the table in the Ad Hoc Committee. This has become possible due to important progress achieved during the past 24 negotiation weeks plus two inter-sessional weeks. I shall abstain from repeating the different points which I had originally listed in my manuscript since Ambassador Batsanov has just alluded to them so eloquently. Remaining problems, however, must be mentioned and should not be underestimated. Although there seems to be general support for a graduated "managed access" approach, the discussion on challenge inspections so far hints at major negotiation difficulties concerning the role of the executive council as well as other issues. On the question of verification of chemical industry we need to find a cost-effective and practicable system, balancing breadth of coverage with protection of legitimate industrial activity. Provisions concerning trade with CW-related chemicals for peaceful purposes will not be an easy problem to solve. Against that, the composition and the functions of the executive council seem to be questions which - once political decisions are taken - could be solved rather quickly. Destruction of old and abandoned chemical weapons urgently needs in-depth consideration. Lastly, on the issue of universal adherence to the chemical weapons convention, important proposals are still on the agenda.

All these problems are solvable. The groundwork has been laid. The details - in which, according to a well-known proverb, the devil sits - can be worked out. What the Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee need is the determination of delegations to do so. Governments and delegations must be aware of the enormous gain in security which could be registered for all States through a well-verified and reliable chemical weapons convention. If delegations have forgotten the risk which otherwise would exist, they should remember the war between Iraq and Iran as well as the recent Gulf war - wars which are almost unimaginable in some other regions of the world.

Each international legal instrument involves the acceptance of certain obligations and restrictions. In the case of the chemical weapons convention the price of such acceptance is made worthwhile not only by security gains but also by the creation of a climate of confidence in which international cooperation and peaceful trade in chemicals can prosper. Let's be realistic: the overall balance is extremely positive. Let's draw the right conclusions from this assessment and establish the CW convention by May 1992.

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