

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

General Secretary Gorbachev has stressed the determination of the Soviet Union to achieve the early and complete elimination of chemical weapons and of what is called "the industrial base for their production". We are interested to hear how the Soviet delegation wishes to amplify this statement in detail in due course.

Enough has been said, I think, to illustrate that progress is possible but that we are not going to sign the convention next week. Key issues, in particular with regard to verification and compliance, remain to be resolved. We must make sure that all existing chemical-weapon stocks are declared and subsequently destroyed over a period of time; that declared chemical weapons plants stop production and are dismantled; that no new chemical weapons are produced clandestinely either in a chemical weapons production facility that never had been declared or under the perfectly innocent guise of the civil chemical industry. Chemical weapons are relatively easy to produce and it is perhaps still easier to hide them. Effectively verifying that the convention is not violated appears to be an immense task. Yet from an organizational point of view the task seems to be manageable as was also indicated in a working document introduced by my delegation in this Conference in 1984 (CD/445).

As already announced in my statement on 15 August 1985, the Netherlands Government intends this year to make a further contribution to clarifying the organizational and technical issues involved in verifying compliance with a future comprehensive chemical-weapons ban. In a workshop to be held this summer, we intend to focus on the question of non-production of chemical weapons in the civil chemical industry. In the past the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom have organized very useful visits to civil chemical plants for members of delegations of the Conference on Disarmament. This time, we aim at making one further step, by concentrating in more detail on the possible methods of verification of non-production. We therefore hope, in co-operation with participants, to do some pioneering work, as it were.

We certainly do not pretend to provide delegations once and for all with the solutions to the problems of verification of non-production, nor will the workshop give participants a full picture of what a routine inspection of a modern chemical plant will look like under a Chemical Weapons Convention. None the less we are confident that it will lead to a greater insight into the technical and organizational problems of verifying non-production and we trust that in this way it will give an impetus to ongoing negotiations on the subject.

I am pleased to announce that the Netherlands Workshop on Verification of Non-Production of Chemical Weapons in the Civil Chemical Industry will be held in our country on 4, 5 and 6 June next. Delegations will shortly receive an invitation to participate in the Workshop. A provisional programme as well as some practical information will be sent as an annex to the invitation. My delegation welcomes any comments or suggestions which may improve or complement the suggested programme. We remain at the disposal of delegations for any additional information they may wish to receive. For the moment, I shall limit myself to some preliminary observations.

It is our intention to enable the participants to acquaint themselves with some of the possibilities for and problems connected with inspecting