

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

be destroyed -- but we feel that a good basis is now available for further consultations and negotiations on remaining issues. This work is, as I understand, well under way under the able guidance of the item co-ordinator for Cluster I, Mr. Nieuwenhuys.

In the area of verification of non-production of chemical weapons, the second major issue I just mentioned, the work of the Conference drew great benefit from informal consultations in the inter-sessional period at the end of last year, and from the deliberations at the session in January. In that relatively brief period discussion of hitherto "untouchable" issues appeared to be possible. We hope that the spirit prevailing in that period will continue to inspire us in these weeks when the Committee is dealing with article VI of the convention.

My delegation welcomes Soviet concurrence with the notion of risk in determining the stringency of verification of non-production. In our view, the risk factor -- essentially the risk that a civil chemical plant will in fact violate the convention -- is important in determining the intensity with which the plant in question should be subject to a monitoring régime. The idea of defining a threshold for annual production, to which Ambassador Nazarkin referred in his statement on 5 March, has been under discussion for some time. Such a quantitative criterion would indeed provide us with one of the factors to determine the risk involved.

In the coming weeks we shall have to get down to the level of practical implementation: what factors are relevant to determine the risks various chemical substances and types of production pose and consequently which inspection régime will be applied for each of them? We are encouraged by the constructive suggestions the item co-ordinator for Cluster III, Mr. Macedo, has recently made on this point.

Useful work on the classification of substances has already been done by the former Chairman of Working Group A, Mr. Richard Rowe. Under his guidance three categories of substances were elaborated under article VI, together with a first outline of a régime for each category. While generally appreciative of the progress achieved so far, my delegation realizes that a number of important issues related to monitoring of production of chemicals have hardly been addressed. The still virtually unexplored and very complex area of commercially produced super-toxic lethal chemicals and the risk they may pose to the convention is only an illustration of the many important problems awaiting a judicious solution.

As for on-site challenge inspections, the third outstanding and perhaps most important issue of disagreement, my delegation appreciates that in his latest interventions, Ambassador Nazarkin has made observations that seem to narrow down some of the differences. We acknowledge that the Soviet delegation has identified two important areas where requests for challenge inspections cannot be refused and that it has broadly supported the British approach for alternative solutions in exceptional circumstances.