

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Today, we wish to consider in detail the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons, which has a special place in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. World-wide public opinion expects the Conference to resolve this issue as early as possible. The activities of the Conference on Disarmament are ever more closely associated in the minds of many with the chemical weapons negotiations. No one would deny that much has been done in this area over the past years. The beginning of intensive negotiations this year on banning chemical weapons under the guidance of the Committee Chairman Ambassador Stanislaw Turbanski is also a source of satisfaction.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned at the slow pace of the negotiations. The talks continue year after year and there are still no tangible results, no radical breakthrough. Some of the parties, as if frightened by the possibility of the negotiations being successfully completed and the convention signed, come out from time to time with deliberately unacceptable and, I would say, extremist proposals.

In spite of all these serious complications resulting from the position of certain parties, the Soviet Union still believes in the possibility of solving this urgent problem and continues to make efforts towards concluding a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons on terms acceptable to all the negotiating parties.

For more than half a century, ever since the signing of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and up to the present day, the Soviet Union has been following a consistent, unswerving course aimed at drawing up and signing a convention which would ban chemical weapons completely and for all time while posing no risks to the security, economic or any other interests of any State taking part in the negotiations.

It may be of some interest to the members of this Conference that as early as 1928 the Soviet delegation to the Preparatory Commission for the General Conference on Disarmament introduced a proposal to supplement the 1925 Geneva Protocol with a new one containing, in particular, the following provisions: all the means and devices serving the purposes of chemical warfare, namely all asphyxiating gases used for military purposes as well as all devices for the diffusion of such gases, in particular gas-throwers, spray devices, balloons, flame-throwers and other devices in service with troops, as well as stored in depots or in the process of production, were to be destroyed. Furthermore, it was proposed that industrial facilities producing chemical weapons should immediately stop their production.

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