

(Mr. Andreotti, Italy)

Today, this goal is within our reach. Although it is difficult to foresee any deadline for the conclusion of negotiations dealing with this complex matter, and although it would be inappropriate to sacrifice the goal of arriving at a truly effective and verifiable convention for the sake of saving time, I none the less believe it necessary to impart a decisive impulse to the negotiations. This can be done by availing ourselves of the important conceptual rapprochements which have recently occurred, and of the favourable international circumstances I mentioned earlier.

The remaining obstacles are mainly connected with the problem of verification, since - in this field more than in any other - only an effective system of controls can give all the signatory countries the certainty that the Convention will truly be implemented, with the appropriate mechanisms for ensuring general compliance. With respect to the ban on chemical weapons, we are convinced that this verification system should provide for:

Verification of the accuracy of the initial declarations;

Verification of arsenals, from the moment of the initial declarations to their destruction, and during transportation to the destruction sites;

The means to ascertain the destruction of existing arsenals and production plants;

The means to ensure that banned chemical warfare agents are no longer produced, either at old plants or at new ones, and that other chemical compounds which might constitute a risk according to the Convention are adequately controlled;

All evidence that member States do not obtain chemical warfare agents from external sources;

The prompt detection of any possible suspect activities.

Since verification poses great technical problems, whose solution entails the involvement of scientists, I would suggest that they be asked to contribute - perhaps through a forum open to top specialists from all countries.

This meeting could be held in Rome or in Erice, in the same spirit as the meeting on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy we organized at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the autumn of 1986.

The further obstacles which still hinder the conclusion of the Convention are for the most part of a technical nature, although one cannot neglect their underlying political implications. I will mention only three of them.

In my view, the time has come to take up again a matter which has recently - and perhaps wrongly - been set aside: I refer to the matter of definitions (article 11 of the Convention). This is clearly a central issue