

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

... The negotiation of a global ban on the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons, which seems to us one of the most important and urgent disarmament goals, has achieved encouraging progress during the 1986 session. Steps forward have been made regarding a more efficient compilation of Articles III, IV and V; a great amount of work was also accomplished by Working Group A with regard to Article VI, in connection with the criteria and the listing of the various categories of chemicals. As for Article IX, we wish to express our appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom and to Mr. Wisnoemoerti of Indonesia: the four points on which Ambassador Cromartie detected a convergence of views constitute, in the opinion of the Italian delegation, a sound basis for a solution of the key issue of on-challenge verification.

Indeed, while not minimizing the importance of other outstanding items, I believe that, after all, the success of our work depends largely on our capability to reach an agreement on a convention banning chemical weapons and that consequently we should aim at conclusive results during this year. The main difficulties lying ahead in this context are still connected with the problem of verification which, indeed, is not simply a technical one. It is a problem having an obvious political dimension; admittedly, verification can also have a confidence-building effect.

By envisaging a verification system for a convention banning all chemical weapons and prescribing their removal from the military arsenals we believe that the Italian delegation is aware that "intrusive" and stringent forms of verification may sometimes be seen by some as restraining national sovereign discretion to a certain extent, or as being prejudicial to the protection of national industrial and commercial secrets. However, we are convinced that such concerns should be overcome through a careful assessment and a better knowledge of the implications of different types of verification, in a spirit