

(Mr. Fields, United States)

Most recent plenary statements about the chemical weapons negotiations, however, have been more constructive in character. Specific suggestions and proposals have been put forward. Among these are recent statements by the representatives of Australia, Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. Yet, on a few occasions charges have been made that some delegations are deliberately complicating the negotiations, that proposals are being made which are designed to be rejected, and that efforts are being made to create loopholes for continued production of chemical weapons. Such statements are demeaning and are frankly unworthy of this Conference. Questioning the motives of one's negotiating partners in fact can only poison the atmosphere and make successful negotiation more difficult.

I appeal to all to put aside inflammatory rhetoric. My delegation is not here to attack, ridicule or summarily dismiss ideas or proposals put forward by other delegations. We are here to negotiate, as I trust are most of the members in this chamber. Therefore, let us all devote our energies to finding mutually acceptable solutions to the many complex and difficult issues remaining in this important negotiation. And in particular, let us focus on the truly pivotal issues — the issues whose resolution is the key to progress. In simple terms, let us negotiate with each other, rather than nag at each other!

At the current stage of the negotiations, three issues seem to my delegation to be the keys to progress. One is the declaration of locations of chemical-weapon stocks and chemical-weapon production facilities. A second is how to help ensure that chemical weapons are not produced under the guise of commercial chemical production. The third is what approach to take to challenge inspection. Today I shall discuss each of these pivotal issues in turn.

The United States has proposed that the locations of chemical-weapon stocks and of chemical-weapon production facilities be declared within 30 days after a State becomes a party to the convention. In itself such a declaration could contribute greatly to building confidence that States are prepared to reduce — and eventually eliminate — their reliance on chemical weapons. But declaration of locations is also an essential element of the verification measures designed to provide confidence that all stocks and facilities have been declared, as well as to provide confidence that the declared stocks and facilities are not misused before they are destroyed.

Let me elaborate. The completeness of declarations cannot be assessed unless a basis for such an assessment has first been established. With adequate information about existing stocks and facilities that have been declared, parties will be able to obtain adequate confidence that there are no stocks and facilities that have not been declared. Declared locations are essential to such an assessment and thus to building confidence in compliance. Once locations have been declared, then any stocks or facilities discovered at undeclared locations would clearly represent a violation of the convention. Furthermore, the systematic international verification measures needed to provide confidence during the period between declaration and destruction cannot be carried out unless such locations are declared. For example, it is obvious that international sealing of stocks or production facilities to prevent their illicit use would not be possible unless these locations are known to the technical secretariat.