

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

At the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, there was general recognition of the importance of the early achievement of a convention banning chemical weapons and of pursuing this matter as one of continuing urgency. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the dynamism and skill with which the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Sujka of Poland, and the three group chairmen, Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Numata of Japan, have guided our work. However, despite their resourcefulness and hard work, the results achieved this summer have fallen short of expectations. It seems that our negotiations are losing momentum.

We are mindful of the difficult problems which still remain, some of which are essentially of a technical nature, while others are political in character. In tackling these issues, and as we work through the details of the draft convention, we should never lose sight of our goal - a convention which ensures that no significant violation goes undetected and which guarantees undiminished security to all States parties. Only such a convention would be viable and capable of attracting wide adherence.

Our discussions in Working Group A on monitoring non-production in the chemical industry have not been encouraging. The texts of article VI and its annex which were handed down to us at the beginning of the session have not been developed to any significant extent. On some of the issues, we have seen a restatement of old positions rather than a serious effort to find solutions. We do not underestimate the complexity of the task of elaborating an effective verification régime for a vast industry producing all kinds of chemicals for a variety of purposes and posing different levels of risk to the convention. We also acknowledge that no undue impediments should be placed in the way of legitimate industrial activities. However, the paramount consideration should be to evolve mechanisms which create confidence in the observance of the convention and, where such be the case, bring non-compliance to light. If we have to err, we should err on the side of greater, not less, intrusiveness.

Although no concrete progress was registered under article VI, considerable useful work was done nevertheless. Our dialogue with representatives of the chemical industry this summer was a useful experience. The concept of ad hoc checks was given a further airing, and the problem of confidentiality of information was taken up in a focused manner for the first time. Both these questions address legitimate concerns and will need further detailed study. As my delegation stated earlier this year, the problem of clandestine production in facilities not subject to routine inspections is a real one. In trying to solve it, we should be careful not to give the technical secretariat any powers which could compromise its non-political character. We understand the importance which industry attaches to the protection of sensitive information vis-à-vis commercial competitors. These concerns should not, however, be allowed to override the need for effective verification. Considerations of commercial advantage, we feel, should here yield to those of national security.