

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

The third and fourth elements of my remarks today deal with chemical weapons, and with the report writing process in which the CD is now engaged. Although the latter item is more immediate in terms of the time pressures we face, I wish to make my principal remarks first on the far more important and central goal of our Conference at this moment: completion of a chemical weapons convention by 1992. Since President Bush announced his chemical weapons initiative last 13 May, the CW Ad Hoc Committee has made significant progress. Article I of the draft convention now explicitly bans use of chemical weapons, against anyone, under any circumstances. In article IV there is now no question about the obligation to complete the destruction of chemical weapons during the 10 years after the convention enters into force. Agreement seems near to place articles X and XI in appendix I of the "rolling text", and we should be able to take the same step with an improved article VI as well. We are now in the midst of serious exploration of challenge inspection, perhaps the thorniest issue in our convention. And we also believe that progress in a number of other areas such as jurisdiction and control will be reflected in the "rolling text".

Bearing in mind our goal, I submit to you that we must now make a conscious decision to direct our energies more closely on the major issues for the remainder of 1991. In my view there are currently four such issues at this stage: challenge inspection, verification in the chemical industry, the composition and decision-making process of the executive council, and universality. I will address each of these issues in turn.

On challenge inspection, as you know, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia presented a new approach last month designed to move the Conference at last toward resolution of this key issue. The four delegations sought to strike the right balance between access necessary for effective verification, and the need to protect sensitive activities that are not related to chemical weapons and avoid potential abuse of challenge inspection provisions. The regime we propose balances all of the security interests of States parties. It will enhance prospects for universal compliance and, when it enters into force, will give the international inspectorate the ability to discover the facts. It will deter would-be violators, and at the same time provide States parties with reasonable protection of their legitimate activities.

No text is perfect. We have taken due note of the views expressed on the proposal in the Ad Hoc Committee. We are encouraged by the general support shown in discussions so far for the concept of graduated, managed access to challenged sites. We are aware that some delegations would prefer more mandatory access, and that others would like to see stronger mechanisms for protecting sensitive sites. We are also pleased that our proposal has generated useful conceptual discussion of the role of the executive council. Much remains to be thrashed out, but we are confident that we can reach consensus on this critical question.