

(Mr. Kostarczyk, Poland)

... Negotiations on the convention on chemical weapons have entered a final and decisive stage. The determination expressed unanimously in General Assembly resolution 46/45 C clearly indicates that the completion of work on the convention this year is within the reach of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, I would like to take this opportunity to express our satisfaction at the appointment of the distinguished Permanent Representative of Germany, Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner, to the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I wish him all the best in discharging his demanding duties and offer him the full cooperation of the Polish delegation in this task.

There is a good basis for optimism. Indeed, the Conference has before it only a few of the outstanding issues that require final decisions. Among them, the most important ones concern the challenge inspection regime, the pattern of routine verification in the chemical industry and the composition of the executive council. Challenge inspection is essential for the effectiveness of the verification regime of the convention. In order to be acceptable to all States it should encompass a proper balance between the requirement to ensure its high efficiency and the need to protect sensitive and confidential information that is not related to chemical weapons. Requesting a challenge inspection should be the responsibility of the requesting State. It would be unrealistic, and even detrimental to the efficiency of such an inspection, to envisage any role for the organization in the assessment of the request in the initial phase, apart, perhaps, from making a technical assessment that all the necessary elements are contained in the request in accordance with the established procedures.

Poland welcomes the emerging consensus on the need to expand the scope of inspections in the chemical industry. Broad coverage of relevant peaceful chemical industry activities constitutes an important confidence-building measure. We are also pleased with the positive attitude of the representatives of chemical industry towards the convention and their recognition of its role in facilitating trade and cooperation in this field. It augurs well for achieving agreement on this issue.

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