

(Mr. Törnudd, Finland)

Since I last spoke from this rostrum one year ago, considerable progress has been achieved with regard to another priority item on the agenda of this Conference, the elaboration of a convention to ban chemical weapons. Although a number of critically important issues remain to be settled, the pace of progress over the past year gives rise to the hope that the remaining problems, too, can be solved in the not too distant future. We wish the new Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden, every success in his important task.

Challenge inspection is undoubtedly the major unresolved issue at this point. We are glad to note that, as last year's Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom, noted in his report to the Committee, a convergence of views now exists on at least four points. Enlarging this common ground to the point of consensus -- by working out the appropriate detailed procedures to everyone's satisfaction -- poses a challenge of its own. Perhaps differentiation by types of challenge inspection objects and accumulating experience from on-site inspections might help to solve this problem.

We are heartened by the progress made in developing régimes for the verification of various categories of chemicals relevant to the convention. For the first time, there is now a provisional list of at least nine known chemical warfare agents which will be banned, except for small-scale production for research, medical or protective purposes. Important work has also been done in developing detailed verification measures for such production. We believe that in perfecting these measures care should be taken not to hamper basic research routinely undertaken in university laboratories or elsewhere.

It is clear that effective verification of the chemical weapons convention requires, in addition to data reporting, both on-site inspections and the use of modern monitoring equipment.

Monitoring equipment for verification purposes has been studied and tested by the Finnish chemical weapons verification project since 1972. As part of our continuing effort to help to provide the necessary technical means for assuring confidence in the convention, the Finnish project is hosting, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, a special workshop in Helsinki. The

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workshop, convened at expert level, will address questions of automatic monitoring in terms of detection of alleged use, verification of destruction and verification of non-production. The results of the workshop will be communicated to all members of the Conference on Disarmament in written form as soon as they are available.