

President: Mr. A. Beesley (Canada)

As for the Conference on Disarmament's priorities, the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction is a central task of the arms control and disarmament process. Your efforts to negotiate a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons therefore is rightly a priority item on your work agenda. Official confirmation by the United Nations Secretary-General of repeated chemical weapons use in the Gulf war, which Canada resolutely condemns, as well as reports of efforts by other countries to acquire a chemical weapons capability, must add to our collective sense of urgency to achieve progress on this item. Canada does not favour diverting efforts from the negotiation of a comprehensive ban in order to address the proliferation problem separately. Nevertheless, out of concern for the problem, Canada recently increased to 14 the number of chemicals subject to export controls and, in consultation with several other countries, we are implementing a warning list procedure for a longer list of chemicals.

In the effort to negotiate a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, there were several welcome developments during the current session of the Conference on Disarmament. The United States delegation made an important clarification of its thinking on how a treaty might apply to differing social systems. The USSR delegation made new and positive substantive proposals relating to certain aspects of verification of a treaty, which my Government hopes will soon be supplemented by further proposals dealing with other aspects of verification. The Canadian Government hopes also that the important recent United Kingdom initiative will facilitate a convergency of views on the sensitive and vital issue of challenge inspections. Under energetic and notably competent chairmanship, the Ad Hoc Committee has made further progress toward resolving some of the more difficult technical issues. The Canadian delegation submitted two working papers as a contribution to the collective effort. The holding by the Netherlands of a workshop relating to verification of non-production, as well as the broad attendance at that workshop, was gratifying and encouraging. It is important that the momentum thus generated be maintained, including through inter-sessional work to the extent practicable.

(Mr. Gucowatov, Belarus)

Item 4, Chemical weapons... is the one item in which most progress has been made, even though by common standards it has been slow. My delegation feels encouraged by the more truly businesslike exchanges which have characterized the discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee as well as in the Working Group this year, enabling real, substantive work to be done.

Ambassador Gucowatov of the United Kingdom as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Chairman of the three Working Groups should be commended for their excellent work and exemplary dedication. The important and valuable results which have been achieved through painstaking work under their guidance should be given due recognition.

We are also grateful to the Netherlands Government for organizing the workshop on verification of non-production of chemical weapons in Holland last June, which has been very instructive and useful and, I might as well say, has helped to advance our work on this important question. I should like to make use of this opportunity to express my Government's appreciation to the Dutch Government for having taken the much-needed initiative.

Some major issues still need to be resolved in fairly concrete and this stage about the progress of an early conclusion of our work on chemical weapons. Indeed the questions which remain are of a nature which might seem