

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The main body will be a consultative committee made up of all the States parties. As it is hoped that the convention will have the greatest possible number of adherents, it will not be easy for the committee to take expeditious decisions and to intervene rapidly and effectively in case of crisis. Consequently, it will be necessary to establish a subsidiary body of the committee, of limited membership and called the executive council, which will be formally subordinate to the committee and will discharge all its functions while the committee is not in session.

Serious differences of opinion have arisen in regard to the composition of the executive council. My delegation believes that the only valid criterion for the selection of the members of that body is that of equitable political and geographical distribution. Using this method, as happens in the case of other bodies in the United Nations family, each group will freely select its representatives, taking account of the parameters it deems appropriate.

As for the difficult problem of decision-making, my delegation inclines in favour of adopting the simple and unambiguous procedure of a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. We believe that to demand consensus would seriously hinder the work of the committee and the council as it would give each of the parties a right of veto that it could exercise at any time, to the detriment of the proper functioning of the convention.

The international verification machinery that is going to be entrusted to the consultative committee and its subsidiary bodies contains two elements that will ensure its full effectiveness: on the one hand, a system of declarations and routine inspections that seeks to be as complete as possible and, on the other, a "safety net" for use only in exceptional cases -- challenge inspection -- designed to remedy possible deficiencies in the normal procedure.

In our negotiations, emphasis was, quite justifiably, placed on building a system with no loopholes, a mechanism that would give everybody full confidence that the provisions of the convention were being observed. A whole series of measures to be applied to the activities of States parties has been designed for this purpose, ranging from permanent verification of destruction of arsenals to systematic inspections, without prior notice, of civilian production facilities. My delegation is fully in favour of a strict régime in order effectively to guarantee the complete disappearance of the chemical threat.

"Challenge inspection" constitutes the essential complement to the routine system. My delegation sees such inspection as an exceptional event prompted by serious doubts about compliance with the convention that have not been dispelled through normal channels. In view of the political damage that it will inevitably cause, we do not believe that it will be frequent. However, we do consider that a State's right to request such inspection if it feels it to be necessary must not be limited.