

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

In concluding my statement, let me turn to the subject of chemical weapons. At the outset of the 1983 session of the Committee it was commonplace to hold the view that prospects for progress, if any, were to be found in the field of chemical disarmament negotiations. Such progress has not materialized. The head of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador Wegener, eloquently elaborated on that disappointing fact a week ago. The delegation of the Netherlands unfortunately has to add its voice to his. It must be clear that if a delegation that opposes the detailed views of another fails to submit a correspondingly detailed proposal of its own, the basic tools for any valuable negotiations are not available.

We are informed -- even more frequently so in recent times -- that it is too early in the day to proceed to the ultimate substantive phase of negotiations on a chemical weapons ban. Such an assertion, no matter who makes recourse to it, hardly seems convincing. The Netherlands holds the view that only in that ultimate phase are delegations really forced to see eye to eye on the remaining key problems. Further delay is hard to accept for all countries which, like the Netherlands, have renounced the option of chemical weapons.

This is not to say that some useful work has not been carried out in 1983. No delegation any longer stands in the way of the incorporation of a use prohibition in the scope of the convention. A good deal of progress was made on conditions, structures and mechanisms for on-challenge verification. The problems relating to key precursors have been defined and analysed, so that the basis has been laid for them to be solved in the hopefully near future.

In evaluating the positive results in the chemical weapons Working Group, one must have the greatest admiration for such men as Dr. Lundin of the Swedish delegation, who has worked longer than anyone else in the Committee on Disarmament and its predecessors with untiring persistence for the cause of chemical disarmament.

Notwithstanding the advances made on many related issues, a breakthrough in the field of the monitoring of stockpile declaration and destruction was not achieved. The laudable efforts of the Polish delegation which co-ordinated the work on this aspect unfortunately were not matched by sufficiently forthcoming positions of

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