

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

perfect legal instrument. Of course, ideally we should set forth an absolute, perfect prohibition. However, since beings are not perfect, and nor are diplomats, there is no alternative but to achieve a complete prohibition, in the context of what is possible and necessary, so as to provide for regional and global security and confidence.

When we say that the provisions should fall within the context of what is possible and necessary, what we mean is that their scope can never go beyond what can qualitatively or quantitatively be examined, certified and verified. There should be no doubt whatsoever as to the intended beneficiary of protection - human beings and, by extension, animals. Expanding the scope of protection to plants, even though the prohibition may be specifically restricted to use, would give rise to a series of collateral problems, such as the verification and implementation of article X, which refers to the threat of use, *inter alia*. The generic or unlimited inclusion, within the definition of chemical weapons, of those substances that do not fall within the classification of "supertoxic lethal" or "lethal" chemicals should be handled very cautiously, and it might perhaps be advisable, since the prohibition cannot be absolute and perfect, to give pride of place in the definition to the effects that occur, that is death, temporary disability or permanent injury. Only in so far as a toxic chemical specified in the convention produces these effects in human beings or animals may it be considered a chemical weapon.

My second thought on the chemical weapons negotiations relates to the problem arising from the destruction of the stockpiles, which according to declarations exceed 90,000 tons. The issue of converting chemicals to a form unsuitable for production of chemical weapons in facilities specifically designed and equipped for that purpose, as provided for in articles IV and V and their annexes, is currently being reconsidered in certain specialized sectors, in view of the difficulties being encountered by at least one of the chemical-weapon States in achieving the total destruction of its chemical stockpile within the stipulated 10-year time-frame. In my delegation's opinion it would be appropriate to re-examine the concept of destruction in the light of the observations and difficulties prompted by the 10-year time-frame. The experts state that starting up a facility to destroy chemical weapons, for example, could take between three, four or six years, including the initial feasibility study. We are all aware, moreover, that the destruction of chemical weapons is very costly, particularly because of the physical security and environmental protection measures involved. We are also aware that there may be alternative methods and technologies to neutralize chemical-weapon stockpiles completely. On the other hand, the 10-year time-frame could be retained, provided that we are all convinced that this is a genuine, feasible time-frame that would be enough for carrying out the destruction or possible neutralization of chemical weapons, and that this will not lead to undue haste or pressure that might endanger the environment.