

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

industrial products produced which do not pose a great threat to the objective of the convention, the data-reporting system should not be devised in an over-complicated manner so as to avoid placing an excessive burden on those enterprises. In certain cases, an enterprise may produce a compound in its production process relevant to the convention, but instead of being separated, the compound is immediately subject to the next step of chemical reaction which would result in a chemical product not prohibited by the convention. In this case, the enterprise would not be required to report the relevant data, for such a declaration would be unfeasible owing to the fact that the intermediate chemical substance thus formed is not separated, measured or stockpiled.

Opinions still differ among various parties on the issue of a "spot check" for facilities covered by the data-reporting system. In our view, as most of the chemicals produced by those facilities are the raw materials of key precursors, the provisions of an effective verification régime governing the facilities producing or using key precursors would suffice to a large extent in forestalling chemical enterprises from producing chemical weapons. Of course, this issue is still open to discussion before a satisfactory solution is arrived at.

In spite of the difficulties involved with the issue of verification of non-production, due to its complexity, we still believe that through our common endeavours a régime which is both effective and not detrimental to the legitimate interests of chemical enterprises could be worked out. Compared with the verification of non-production, challenge inspection stands out as an even more difficult task, because the former only relates to routine inspections under normal conditions, while the latter relates to inspections of a special nature under exceptional circumstances. Up to now, the divergence over challenge inspection has shown little sign of narrowing. It is our hope that with consultations and negotiations in various forms and through different channels, a breakthrough will result on this key issue so as to remove a major obstacle in the way to the convention.

At the present stage of negotiations, the destruction of chemical weapons, the verification of non-production and challenge inspection are the major outstanding issues which call for priority attention. Apart from these, however, some other important issues remain to be addressed, one of which being that of definition. In the course of our negotiations, the Chinese delegation and some other delegations have felt that the definition of chemical weapons as it stands now is deficient and easily leads to conceptual confusions. Therefore, it needs to be further examined. For that purpose, we stand ready to engage in consultations and discussions with other delegations in order to find an appropriate solution.