

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

The dividing line goes between those who see the challenge mainly as a bilateral action through an international instrument and those who see it as a multilateral action triggered by a State party. For my delegation it is natural to regard challenge inspections as a truly international concern, reducing the role of the challenging State without overlooking it. Be that as it may, the important thing is to finally face the issue of mandatory challenge inspections, and to ensure that the perceived agreement on the need for such inspections results in agreed principles for their implementation. Only when the picture has been thus completed can we realistically assess the possible need for additional ad hoc verification measures.

From plenary statements it seems that the two major chemical weapons possessors hold similar views on challenge inspections. This has been the case for some time now. They also have, between them, the greatest experience of practical implementation of mandatory on-site inspections at short notice. In view of that shared experience, as well as their shared commitment to a chemical weapons convention, they could exercise some leadership on this issue and make, jointly or individually, practical proposals regarding challenge procedures. That would certainly be more constructive than simply to state that the divergence of views in the Committee is too wide to permit consensus.

Considerable time has also been spent in Working Group 1 on the issue of confidentiality. My delegation understands the concerns of many delegations over this problem. The trial inspections have already shed some light on what the real sensitivities might be. This having been said, the confidentiality issue belongs, in the view of my delegation, to a category which is attracting disproportionate attention. Except for general guidelines on confidentiality, included in an annex or otherwise, some detailed provisions on the procedures for routine and challenge inspections will be needed in the "rolling text". Many of the issues we address, however, should preferably be referred to the Preparatory Commission or to the Technical Secretariat. I should like to add in this connection that my delegation does not at present see the need for a special article on confidentiality.

Working Group 2 on legal issues may not have reached conclusive results, but the work it has carried out has been extremely useful in so far as a thorough inventory of different alternatives has been made and the problems have been well defined and identified. The detailed preparation and solid legal skills of its Chairman, Mr. Gomaa of Egypt, have decisively contributed to the systematic approach taken by the Group.

Sweden supports the efforts to establish a mechanism for amendments to the convention on the principle of equal obligations of all States parties. One means of excluding the possibility of amendments incompatible with the objectives of the convention could be an "immunity" period of 10 years, corresponding to the destruction period, during which no article could be amended. After this period, an amendment should require a decision by a qualified majority of the States parties. Certain provisions in the annexes should, however, not be subject to these stringent amendment procedures. Such changes as are necessary to keep the convention up to date and facilitate its implementation should be subject to a simplified procedure for revision.