

(Mr. Busby, USA)

Today, I intend to speak only about the Committee's efforts to ban chemical weapons. My delegation's views on the other areas of the Committee's work will be presented at the next plenary meeting. I would like to offer some general comments on the Committee's work on chemical weapons in 1983, then comment on some recent statements made by other delegations, and finally advance some ideas about next year.

Let me begin with some general remarks. The results of the 1983 session in the chemical weapons field have been meagre and quite disappointing to my delegation. This is true despite the best efforts of the Chairman of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador McPhail, and a number of other delegations, including my own.

The accomplishments of 1983 lie largely in the realm of better organization of work. For this we all owe a great deal to Ambassador McPhail. Under his leadership the tendency toward fragmentation of the discussions has been reversed. The Committee has been able to deal comprehensively with key problem areas and to consolidate work on related issues of scope, declaration, and verification in each area. Furthermore, for the first time the Committee has an agreed document which records the areas of convergence and divergence and can thus serve as a generally accepted basis for future work.

Certainly, useful and important work has been carried out by the four contact groups as well. We very much appreciate the efforts of the contact group co-ordinators. Some progress was made in crystallizing and recording convergence where it previously existed only in nascent form. However, except in the area of non-use of chemical weapons, little headway was made in finding mutually acceptable solutions to unresolved issues. It is notable that delegations which have held strong views on the non-use issue have displayed a spirit of co-operation and flexibility to enable progress to be made. We hope this spirit will continue and that remaining issues in this area, as well as others, can be resolved.

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