

(Mr. van den Broek, the Netherlands)

Determination should guide us in a joint effort to bring the chemical weapons treaty within sight. In defining the essential characteristics of the treaty, some basic facts are to be borne in mind.

Firstly, the convention must, by its very nature, be detailed so as to cover all essential requirements; on the other hand, we must realize that not every single detail can be foreseen or taken care of. Technological developments will not come to a halt. The treaty should therefore provide for a continuous review, among other things, of the lists of chemicals to be covered under the different régimes of control and prohibition.

Secondly, verification remains a key component of every credible and solid arms control treaty. That applies in particular to the chemical weapons convention. There, verification requires essentially a three fold structure: declaring and dismantling of stocks and production facilities; strict verification provisions including routine inspection of the relevant part of the chemical industry in an equitable but adequate way; and finally an appropriate régime for consultation, fact-finding procedures and challenge inspections.

The effectiveness of challenge inspections is closely related to the efficiency of the routine part of the verification régime -- verification of destruction and verification of non-production. A very stringent system of challenge inspection, and that is what we need, will prove acceptable only if it is reserved for exceptional cases of serious concern about compliance. The first condition for an effective challenge-inspection régime is therefore an effective system for routine inspection. The second condition in my view, is that when a party considers a challenge inspection to be necessary, no obstacle whatever should be able to prevent the inspection from taking place. The third condition is that an inspection should always and under all circumstances lead to a quick and clear answer. The challenged State party should therefore be under a stringent obligation to disprove the allegations contained in the challenge request.

I am perfectly aware that meeting these conditions is not possible without paying the price of a certain openness. I am, however, convinced that, upon close consideration, this price is relatively small and is convincingly outweighed by the common goal of an effective world-wide ban on chemical weapons. Important work on this subject has been done in the recent past, especially by the United Kingdom (see document CD/715) and by the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. The Netherlands will consider making a further contribution to the discussion on this most important subject when appropriate.

Recent reports on renewed use of these horrendous weapons in the war between Iran and Iraq have once again underlined the urgency of our work to bring about agreement on a comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention.

The chemical-weapons negotiations surely gained momentum this year. Let us use the remaining two months of the summer session to the maximum, as well as the later part of the year when the CD is not in formal session. Even if the CD is not in session between September and January, this should not prevent us from pursuing the work with vigour.