

Mr. von WAGNER (Germany): A number of countries have reported to the Conference on Disarmament the outcome of national chemical weapons practice challenge inspections, including the Netherlands, Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany. All these exercises were intended to test the procedures that we have already worked out in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, in order to draw lessons from practical experience and thus contribute to the completion of an effective challenge inspection régime by providing a better understanding of the problems involved. Most recently Canada and the Netherlands introduced in CD/1052 the report on their joint trial challenge inspection at a military base in Germany. Today I would like to introduce, on behalf of both the United Kingdom and Germany, a report on two joint CW practice challenge inspections carried out in military facilities. The detailed report on the outcome of these exercises is tabled as document CD/1056 - working paper CD/CW/WP.330.

In view of the extensive experience both countries had already gained in the course of their previous national practice challenge inspections (PCIs), the two joint exercises, one in each country, were intended to give added realism to the PCI concept, to re-examine once more the conclusions they had reached so far, and to see what further lessons could be learned. The first exercise was held in the Federal Republic of Germany from 21 to 23 May 1990 at an air force base. The exercise was conducted under joint Anglo-German control, with the United Kingdom providing the inspection team and challenging State observer, and the Federal Republic the home team. The second exercise was held in the United Kingdom from 18 to 21 June 1990 at an ammunition storage facility. This exercise was also held under joint control, but with the roles reversed. Both countries concluded that the exercises had been conducted in a very positive and co-operative spirit, and that a number of lessons had been learned, both in confirming the conclusions that had been reached in their respective national PCIs, and in providing new insights and perspectives on the issue of challenge inspection.

Of the multitude of lessons learned, which include further practical experience in sample-taking and the use of instrumentation, like X-ray and mobile analytical equipment, and which are reported and discussed in detail in the report, let me highlight here only two of the principal conclusions drawn. Firstly, the two joint exercises have confirmed for both countries the key importance of the concept of challenge inspections, based on short notice as well as access to any challenged site, as an effective means for deterring circumvention of, as well as ensuring compliance with, the chemical weapons convention. Secondly, the joint exercises have demonstrated once more that, using managed access techniques in an intelligent and inventive way, inspectors are able to obtain the relevant information they seek, while sensitive information unrelated to chemical weapons remains protected. This has proved to be particularly true in applying the random selective access proposals elaborated in the United Kingdom paper, CD/1012.