

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 7 APRIL 1988 FROM THE DEPUTY HEAD OF THE
DELEGATION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY ADDRESSED
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
TRANSMITTING A NOTE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY EVOKED BY THE RECENT REPORTS ABOUT
THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN THE WAR BETWEEN IRAQ
AND IRAN

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a note from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany evoked by the recent reports about the use of chemical weapons in the war between Iraq and Iran and containing an appeal to the nations participating in the Conference on Disarmament to speed up progress towards the conclusion of a global convention on chemical weapons.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the attached note as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Rüdiger Lüdeking (signed)
Deputy Head of Delegation

Note verbale

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany presents its compliments to the States participating in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and wishes to inform them of its deep concern at the recent reports about the use of chemical weapons in the war between Iraq and Iran. They illustrate to mankind the horrific effects of such means of mass destruction. All over the globe people have been shocked by this blatant violation of international law.

The use of chemical warfare agents is a clear breach of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning the use of chemical weapons. It violates the legal conscience of the whole community of nations.

The suffering of the victims of chemical warfare obliges all governments to take speedy action. The complete elimination of this ghastly category of weapons can only be achieved by means of a convention which places a global ban on chemical weapons.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore appeals to all States participating in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to give the highest priority to a global ban on chemical weapons. The aim must be to work out by consensus, on the basis of the Conference's careful preparations, practical solutions for the remaining problems in the draft convention. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is convinced that, even as regards the complex verification issue, it is possible to achieve through joint efforts an agreement that will take into account the security requirements of all nations. Positive developments that have emerged from the negotiations recently should now be resolutely used to achieve further progress. In the remaining weeks of the spring session, the work on the draft convention could still be considerably advanced.

The foundations have already been laid for agreed solutions to the central issues on on-challenge inspections and the verification of non-production. The Conference also has at its disposal well-developed concepts with regard to the convention régime. Initial steps towards greater transparency in the chemical weapons sector, which should be followed by others, are conducive to the course of the negotiations.

The recent use of chemical weapons in the war between Iraq and Iran is an urgent warning to the participants in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to meet their responsibility in the negotiations. All nations are called upon to intensify their efforts in Geneva and to widen the basic consensus but not to jeopardize it by introducing new concepts.

Chemical weapons should no longer have a place in any country's arsenal. All nations have a great responsibility to work towards the conclusion of a convention now, not at some time in the future.

Geneva, 7 April 1988

To the
States participating in the
Conference on Disarmament
in Geneva