

CD/PV.31
26 April 1979
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 26 April 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. P. NOTERDAEME

(Belgium)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. BENSMAIL

Argentina: Mr. F.J. DAVILA

Australia: Mr. L.D. THOMSON
Mr. A.J. BEHM
Ms. M.S. WICKES

Belgium: Mr. P. NOTERDAEME
Mr. P. BERG
Mr. G. VAN DUYSE

Brazil: Mr. A. CELSO DE OURO PRETO

Bulgaria: Mr. P. VOUTOV
Mr. I. PETROV
Mr. R. DEYANOV

Burma: U SAW HLAING
U THEIN AUNG
U THAUNG HTUN

Canada: Mr. R. HARRY JAY
Mr. J.T. SIMARD

Cuba: Mrs. V.B. JACKIEWICH

Czechoslovakia: Mr. V. TYLNER
Mr. L. STAVINOHÁ

Egypt: Mr. O. EL-SHAFEI
Mr. M. EL-BARADEI
Mr. N. FAHMY

Ethiopia: Mr. T. TERREFE

France: Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. BENOIT D'ABOVILLE
Mr. GESBERT

German Democratic Republic: Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. S. KHAN
Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. J. PÖHLMANN
Mr. H. MÜLLER

Hungary: Mr. M. DOMOKOS
Mr. C. GYORFFY
Mr. A. LAKATOS

India: Mr. C.R. GHAREKHAN
Mr. S.T. DEVARE

Indonesia: Mr. C. ANWAR SANI

Iran: Mr. M. FARTASH
Mr. D. CHILATY

Italy: Mr. N. DI BERNARDO
Mr. M. MORENO
Mr. C. FRATESCHI
Mr. FOLCO DE LUCA

Japan: Mr. M. OGISO
Mr. T. NONOYAMA
Mr. T. IWANAMI
Mr. R. ISHII

Kenya: Mr. G.N. MUNIU

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCÍA ROBLES
Miss LUZ MARIA GARCIA

Mongolia:
Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. ERDENECHULUUN
Mr. L. BAYART

Morocco:
Mr. M. RAHHALI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands:
Mr. R.H. FEIN
Mr. A.J. MEERBURG

Nigeria:
Mr. K. AHMED
Mr. T. OLUMOKO

Pakistan:
Mr. J.K.A. MARKER
Mr. M. AKRAM

Peru:
Mr. J. AURICH MONTERO

Poland:
Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. A. OLSZWOKA
Mr. H. PAC
Mr. B. RUSSIN

Romania:
Mr. C. ENE
Mr. V. TUDOR
Mr. T. MELESCANU

Sri Lanka
Mr. I.B. FONSEKA

Sweden:
Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. L. NORBERG
Mr. J. LUNDIN
Mr. S. STRÖMBÄCK

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:
Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN
Mr. A.M. VAVILOV
Mr. A.I. TIOURENKOV
Mr. Y.V. KOSTENKO
Mr. N.G. ANTIUKHIN
Mr. SOKOLSKY

United Kingdom:

Mr. D.M. SUMMERHAYES

Mr. N. MARSHALL

Mr. P.M.W. FRANCIS

United States of America:

Mr. A.S. FISHER

Mr. C. FLOWERREE

Mr. A. AKALOVSKY

Mr. M. DALEY

Mr. M.L. SANCHES

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT

Yugoslavia:

Mr. D. DJOKIĆ

Zaire:

Mr. KAMANDA WA KAMANDA

Mr. MULONGANDUSU ESUK

NON-MEMBER COUNTRIESFinland: ^{1/}

Mr. E. RAJAKOWSKI

Mr. G. CASTREN

Mr. F. EDMAN

Switzerland: ^{2/}

Mr. O. EXCHAQUET

Mr. M. JEANRENAUD

^{1/} By decision of the Committee on Disarmament of 25 April 1979
(see CD/PV.30, page 26).

^{2/} By decision of the Committee on Disarmament of 25 April 1979
(see CD/PV.30, page 26).

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Gentlemen, I have the honour to open the thirty-first meeting on disarmament. Today we shall continue consideration of the fourth topic on the Committee's agenda "Chemical Weapons". Before starting on the list of speakers, I wish to say that, after consulting the delegations, I am now in a position to propose the dates for the next session of the Group of Seismic experts. As a result of these consultations, I find that the delegations would be able to accept the following dates: the next session of the seismic Group would be held from 16 to 27 July. If there are no objections to this proposal, I would ask you to take note of the seventh report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to consider international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events. The Ad Hoc Group will hold its next session at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 16 to 27 July 1979.

It was so decided.

Mr. THOMSON (Australia): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to take the floor during this initial discussion on item 4 of the Committee's agenda -- Chemical Weapons.

We are glad that the Committee was able to conclude the prolonged discussions on procedural matters preoccupying it since January last, in time to begin considering important questions of substance before the conclusion of this first spring session.

We are particularly glad that it has been possible to open the consideration of chemical weapons because doing so enables us to begin to fulfil the request, in United Nations General Assembly resolution 33/59A, of which Australia was a co-sponsor, which inter alia called upon the Committee on Disarmament "as a matter of high priority, to undertake, at the beginning of its 1979 session, negotiations with a view to elaborating an agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and for their destruction, taking into account all existing proposals and future initiatives".

Paragraph 75 of the Programme of Action of the Final Document of the United Nations special session devoted to disarmament notes that:

"The complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction represent one of the most urgent measures of disarmament. Consequently, the conclusion of a convention to this end, on which negotiations have been going on for

(Mr. Thomson, Australia)

several years, is one of the most urgent tasks of multilateral negotiations. After its conclusion, all States should contribute to ensuring the broadest possible application of the convention through its early signature and ratification."

Australia attaches a great deal of importance to the early conclusion of an effective chemical weapons convention. In his statement to the Committee on Disarmament on its opening day, on 24 January this year, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Andrew Peacock, said that a chemical weapons convention presented an immediate and urgent task for the Committee. He noted that chemical weapons were a complex issue; one which would take up a considerable amount of the Committee's time. That is why the Australian delegation supported the early consideration of this matter by the Committee on Disarmament.

The forthcoming preparatory conference for the Biological Weapons Review Conference is a timely reminder to all Committee members parties to the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention, that they have undertaken, in terms of Article IX of that Convention, to reach early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and for the destruction of present stocks. That Convention also enjoins parties to negotiate appropriate measures concerning equipment and means of delivery specifically designed for the production or use of chemical agents for weapons purposes.

As we are all aware, the United States and the Soviet Union have been conducting bilateral negotiations since August 1976 with a view to developing a joint initiative on the prohibition of chemical weapons and introducing it to the Committee on Disarmament. My delegation has read with interest past joint progress reports on the status of the discussions submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) by the United States and the Soviet Union. We would welcome any further elaboration by those two parties on progress that has been made recently. In this connexion, we noted with interest the suggestion put forward in this Committee by the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Jay, on 29 March, that this briefing might usefully take the form of one or more jointly tabled working papers. We express the hope that further progress will be made in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, so that these two parties can present their long awaited joint initiative. The early tabling of that initiative would greatly assist progress towards the conclusion of an internationally acceptable chemical weapons convention.

(Mr. Thomson, Australia)

But my delegation shares the view, already expressed here by a number of other delegations, that it is not necessary to await the tabling of such a joint initiative before the Committee on Disarmament itself can make a constructive contribution to the elaboration of a chemical weapons convention. As has been noted by others, a chemical weapons convention is of concern to all countries, not just to a few. My delegation believes that discussions within the Committee need not have a harmful effect on the bilateral discussions between the United States and the USSR. On the contrary, we believe that they could have the opposite effect, imparting a helpful impetus to progress in those talks.

I would like now to turn to the two chemical weapons workshops conducted recently by the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. My delegation takes this opportunity to express its warm thanks to those two countries for the opportunity offered by them to Australia to participate in their workshops.

The representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom have already given this Committee details of the activities that took place during the workshops, including

- (1) visits to industrial chemical plants manufacturing phosphorus-based products;
- (2) an inspection of the dismantling and destruction of the former chemical weapons pilot production plant at Nancekuke in the United Kingdom; and
- (3) a demonstration and discussion of protective equipment as a defence against chemical weapons.

The distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Summerhayes, also referred, in his statement to the Committee on Tuesday 24 April, to the informal round table discussions that took place during the visits, and to some of the views emerging during those discussions.

(Mr. Thomson, Australia)

The Australian delegation found experience of both workshops to be of real assistance in developing our own thinking on some of the important matters before this Committee. It is still a little too early for us to make a thorough assessment of the experience gained through our participation in the workshops; we are still giving thought to some of the very significant issues raised in discussions at the workshops.

But we are in no doubt about the high value of one aspect of the workshops.

This was the fact that they brought together an international group of scientists, defence personnel and diplomatic officials in an informal setting which enabled a very valuable flow of information and views to take place on the subject of chemical warfare, with a breadth and ease which was certainly new, in our experience.

I believe that the result of such an intermingling and exchange was both an increased understanding of the issues and complexities involved in preparing a chemical weapons convention and an enhanced appreciation of the different perspectives which would be brought to bear by the different groups involved in drafting the convention.

My delegation feels that, if there were to be similar workshops in the future -- and they would seem to us to be of value as confidence-building measures -- they might usefully be opened to as broad a range of participants as were these first two workshops. We would also hope that a wider range of countries might feel able to accept an invitation to attend any such future workshops.

Turning back to our current discussions, which we hope will help to promote a constructive and positive international approach to the elaboration of a chemical weapons convention, I would like to make some brief concluding comments.

First, while being well aware of the severe constraints on the Committee's time in discussing matters of substance at this spring session, and appreciating

(Mr. Thomson, Australia)

that it was not feasible, on this occasion and at this late stage, to devote more than one week to agenda item 4, my delegation would not wish this allocation to be taken in any way as a precedent for the length of time to be devoted to this agenda item or any other in the future. Indeed, my delegation would welcome a continued discussion of chemical weapons during this year's summer session of the Committee scheduled to commence in June. In this regard we have looked with considerable interest and sympathy at the proposals put forward by the delegations of Italy (in CD/5), the Netherlands (in CD/6) and the Group of 21 (CD/11). In particular, I would wish to associate my delegation with the remarks made here yesterday by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Fein. In his statement Ambassador Fein noted that it would be desirable for the Committee to decide, before the close of this session, on the dates on which it would resume its chemical weapons discussions in the summer, and proposed a period of two weeks in the later part of June and/or early July.

Secondly, my delegation is of the view that it might be valuable for the Committee to give further consideration to confidence-building measures in the chemical weapons field. I have mentioned earlier that the exchange of information that took place during the workshops in the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom, and the dialogue which commenced at Nancekuke in the United Kingdom on protective defence against chemical weapons, seem to us to be useful examples of such measures.

Thirdly and finally, as this Committee will, I hope, soon be faced with detailed negotiations on the complexities of a chemical weapons convention, I wonder if it might not be possible for our Secretariat to investigate the feasibility of arranging, here in Geneva at an appropriate time, perhaps under the auspices of the Centre for Disarmament and UNITAR, a seminar on chemical weapons for interested delegations. I have in mind something along the lines of seminars which I understand have been organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna for permanent representatives there, on nuclear non-proliferation issues. I believe these have been found helpful.

Mr. EL-SHAFFI (Egypt): This being the first time I take the floor during the month of April, I would like to associate myself with the previous speakers who have congratulated you, Mr. Chairman, on the assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. Your leadership and guidance have preempted any attempt by me to laud your proven wisdom and talents.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to avail myself of this opportunity to express my sincere admiration, and that of my delegation, also to your predecessor, Ambassador Thomson of Australia, for his patience, perseverance and impeccable leadership during the month of March, which enabled us to conclude successfully our discussion on the Agenda, and finally to initiate a discussion on substantive issues.

The Committee on Disarmament has decided to consider the item entitled "Chemical Weapons" in the first part of its first session. This priority decision is a faithful reflection of the sense of urgency and importance attached to this question by the international community, a matter which cannot be over-emphasized.

Since its 26th session in 1971, the General Assembly of the United Nations has adopted numerous successive resolutions on this subject, which inter alia requested the CCD to continue negotiations, as a matter of high priority, with a view to reaching an early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and for their destruction.

As recently as its 33rd session the General Assembly adopted two resolutions on chemical weapons. In resolution 33/59 A the Assembly requested the Committee on Disarmament, as a matter of high priority, to undertake, at the beginning of its 1979 session, negotiations with a view to elaborating an agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and for their destruction, taking into account all existing proposals and future initiatives.

In resolution 33/71 H the Committee is further requested to undertake, on a priority basis at its first session in January 1979, negotiations concerning a treaty or convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all types of chemical weapons and on their destruction.

(Mr. El-Shafei, Egypt)

In its Final Document, the first special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament specifies that the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction represent one of the most urgent measures of disarmament. Consequently, the conclusion of a convention to this end, on which negotiations **have** been going on for several years, is one of the most urgent tasks of multilateral negotiations.

So much for the moral exhortations and legal imperatives to act, and to act immediately. In this respect we regard the Committee's decisions to consider the subject of chemical weapons on a priority basis as an indication on its part to be more responsive to these exhortations. However, we believe that this Committee cannot and should not limit itself to the general exchange of views if it purports to achieve a concrete agreement.

This brings me to some of the procedural questions which have a direct bearing on the question of substance. The first question is one of methodology. In this respect three papers have been submitted during this part of the session. I am referring of course to the papers presented by Italy, contained in document CD/5, the Netherlands contained in document CD/6, and the Group of 21 document CD/11. One can safely conclude that they all share the same basic approach, namely, that multilateral negotiations should start in earnest; that they should not and need not be preceded by, or await the ongoing bilateral talks between the United States and the USSR; and that multilateral negotiations should be conducted in a systematic and structured manner.

Enough time has elapsed since the United States and USSR issued their joint communiqué of 3 July 1971, in which they proclaimed that they had agreed to consider a joint initiative "with respect to the conclusion, as a first step, of an international Convention dealing with the most dangerous, lethal means of chemical weapons". There is unfortunately no indication up till now that this initiative is going to materialize in the form of an agreement in the near future.

The last report the CCD received on this subject was similar to earlier reports, namely a brief declaration limiting itself to some general propositions; that the political and technical problems involved are interrelated and complex; that some

(Mr. El-Shafei, Egypt)

progress on the scope of the agreement and its verification has been achieved; and that important questions still remained to be resolved. This kind of report inevitably left the Committee almost totally in the dark, unable either to assess or measure progress in these bilateral negotiations, or to proceed beyond the general exchange of views.

My country would like to believe that we have embarked on a new era of multilateral disarmament negotiations with the conceptual and institutional change brought about by the adoption of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We no longer expect the previous state of affairs, and hope to receive at the earliest possible date a detailed report on the state of the bilateral negotiations, a report which would enhance the negotiating process. Equally we believe that multilateral negotiations should start as soon as possible.

This brings me to the question of the negotiating mechanism. My country's views in this regard are adequately reflected in the proposal of the Group of 21. We believe that the establishment of an ad hoc working group entrusted with the task of elaborating a draft convention on a chemical weapons ban is a step which has long been overdue.

Naturally, we are aware that the task is complex and time-consuming, but this is an added reason to accept the challenge and to start immediately rather than protract the multilateral negotiations.

The working group will have to negotiate on the basis of draft treaties, working papers and proposals previously submitted to the CCD or those submitted to this Committee or its ad hoc group. This necessarily will include any agreement that will, it is hoped, be reached between the two negotiating Powers. Moreover, in CD/11, special care was taken, that the ad hoc group's modus operandi would not hinder or impede the bilateral negotiations but rather foster and complement it. In the draft decision presented by the members of the Group of 21, this Committee would request the States participating in the bilateral negotiations to inform the ad hoc working group fully on the state of their negotiations, indicating areas in which agreement has been reached, as well as issues which still are outstanding. This exchange of information could develop into an efficient negotiating process where

(Mr. El-Shafei, Egypt)

different levels of negotiations can proceed concurrently, with the aim of being consolidated into an integral whole at the end of the process. In this respect we note with gratification, that the concept of parallelism has also been adopted by a group of socialist countries in their proposal contained in document CD/4 where it is stated that the preparation and conduct of negotiations on ending the production of nuclear weapons and destroying them should not be to the detriment of the current bilateral and multilateral negotiations on various aspects of the limitation of nuclear armaments, including strategic armaments, nor should they impede the achievement of bilateral or multilateral agreement on the limitation or destruction of any nuclear armaments on a mutually agreed basis.

With that understanding, namely that multilateral and bilateral negotiations will complement rather than contradict each other, and that the aim of any bilateral or trilateral talks is to facilitate and enhance multilateral negotiations and not to preempt or impede such a process, my delegation strongly urges that the draft decisions presented by the Group of 21 be well received and accepted.

Turning now to the question of substance, I would like to recall that my country made its position clear when it subscribed to the paper presented in 1973 to the CCD by a group of non-aligned and neutral countries. I am referring to working paper tabled as document CCD/400, which set down, in no ambiguous terms, the basic broad principles for a chemical weapons ban. In our view the propositions included in that paper remain valid. The paper states that negotiations should aim at reaching a comprehensive ban covering the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons, their equipment and means of delivery as well as the destruction of existing stocks. It further states that the degree of danger represented by the use of chemical agents for military purposes depends, besides their toxicity, to a high degree on the protection available, as well as on the means of delivery. It goes on to state that it is essential that the prohibition of chemical weapons should be coupled with adequate verification, and on this issue it affirms that the question of verification has both technical and political aspects which should be reconciled and therefore it is connected with the scope of the prohibition, and that solutions to the problem of scope and verification should not be discriminatory and should maintain an acceptable balance of obligations and responsibilities for all States.

The compliance with any convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction, whether

(Mr. El-Shafei, Egypt)

comprehensive or gradual in approach, is largely dependent on the verification methods it encompasses. The convention must provide, if it is to be of value, at the very least, a limited degree of satisfaction and assurance to all parties concerned, that their compliance with it will not lead to diminished security, and that the other parties to the convention are complying with it with an equal degree of righteousness and exactitude.

Some countries have apprehensions about the exclusive reliance on national technical measures for verification. Others believe that compliance with the convention should be based on such national measures. We fully comprehend, and appreciate, these divergent opinions.

However, while not attempting to belittle the significant added value of national verification measures, we sincerely believe that such measures would be inadequate to provide the necessary assurances for all concerned parties, and should be complemented by international measures.

We encourage national verification measures, such as unilateral declarations related to the prohibition of production and development of chemical weapons and agents, particularly those concerning the destruction of **existing stockpiles**. National legislation and regulations aimed at implementing the prohibition could be beneficial and necessary. The establishment of a national verification system, to co-ordinate its activities with an equivalent international body, is another valuable and foreseeable measure.

The absolute necessity for tangible assurances for States on issues of national security makes it imperative that verification means be universally non-discriminatory in nature, and international in application. With these requirements in mind, and giving high and justly warranted emphasis to the security requirements of sovereign States, we believe that only a qualified international verification organ can co-ordinate national and international verification measures. Only such an organ, with the necessary degree of independence, can be universal and non-discriminate in nature; by definition its axis of operation will span the continents of our globe, and its findings should be made available to all.

The pace of technological advancement in the world has had multifaceted effects, occasionally with conflicting vices and virtues. Technological advancement has allowed us to foresee the use of extra-territorial monitoring techniques, including

(Mr. El-Shafei, Egypt)

satellites, as means for objective and tangible assurances for compliance with disarmament measures. On the other hand, the same technological progress has rendered these measures less effective and allowed clandestine concealment of arms potential capability. A very simple illustration of the dilemma is that while the effectiveness of extra-territorial monitoring in verifying the destruction of known stockpiles of chemical weapons and the dismantling of known chemical warfare plants is not challenged, these techniques alone cannot guarantee that a prohibition of the development of chemical weapons and agents is being complied with, or that concealed chemical weapons plants have not been, and are not being, established. In other words the effectiveness of such techniques is restricted to verifying declared intentions related to known chemical plants or unclassified stockpiles or capabilities.

Without prejudice to the other verification measures, we believe that on-site inspection remains the most effective and applicable verification measure capable of adequately providing the assurances required by the concerned parties. The recent workshops, which the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom so graciously hosted, have shed light on the feasibility of applying on-site verification measures without sacrificing industrial secrets. Future workshops should encourage the development of techniques that allow inspectors the liberty of taking samples and photographs, when necessary.

Verification measures should not be restricted to organophosphorous agents but should encompass non-organophosphorous agents which are also used in chemical warfare. Scientific advancement has widened the range of chemical agents with arms potential. For verification measures to be effective they would also have to cover binary chemical weapons. These binary agents provide the more military and technologically advanced countries with an enormous military capability in chemical weapons, without having to face the often obtuse and complex problems of their storage or stockpiling. There is no need to mention all, for that would be a long list of sophisticated weapons which could not be verified except through on-site inspection.

These are my delegation's preliminary thoughts and reflections on the subject under discussion. My delegation would be prepared at a later stage of the negotiations to make an in-depth contribution towards the elaboration of the different elements of the desired convention.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Egypt, Ambassador El-Shafei, for his statement. I was deeply touched by your kind words concerning myself and my predecessor, Ambassador Thomson.

Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary) (translated from French): We are almost at the end of your term of office as Chairman, but nevertheless I cannot miss this opportunity of expressing to you my own and my delegation's satisfaction that you assumed the chairmanship of our Committee for this period.

I wish also to congratulate you and your predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Thomson, for your efficient performance of the difficult and sometimes arduous duties connected with the elaboration of our Committee's agenda and programme of work.

I am most happy to have the opportunity of congratulating the new representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Summerhayes, and the permanent representative of Zaïre, Ambassador Kamanda Wa Kamanda. I wish them every success in their missions and I assure them of my delegation's collaboration.

[The speaker continues in English]

My delegation shares the views expressed by many other delegations that it was wise and timely to put the subject of the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons on the agenda and programme of work of the Committee on Disarmament. It is one of the most urgent priority tasks before us, not only because these weapons of mass destruction gain an increasing role in the military arsenals, but also because these weapons can be produced relatively easily by any industrially developed country; thus they are a potential factor in the continuing arms race.

For these reasons, among others, the Hungarian representatives supported any step which seemed likely to promote advance in this field of disarmament in this Committee, by co-sponsoring the first draft convention submitted by the socialist States in 1972, as well as supporting draft resolutions submitted to the various sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

We are of the opinion that in view of the urgency of the subject, the Committee should as soon as possible proceed to the elaboration of an international agreement providing for the complete and comprehensive prohibition of the development and production of chemical weapons and for the destruction of their stockpiles.

(Mr. Domokos, Hungary)

My delegation has carefully studied the working papers CD/5, CD/6, CD/11 submitted respectively by Italy, the Netherlands and the Group of 21 earlier during the present session of the Committee on Disarmament. I would like to express my appreciation to these delegations for their contribution to our common aim to prohibit the development and production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. In our view the working papers referred to contain interesting suggestions and ideas on how the Committee should deal with the subject in its future work.

For instance working paper CD/5 correctly suggests that "the multilateral negotiations within the Committee on Disarmament, without hindering current bilateral consultation between the United States and the USSR, should, as a first step, review existing proposals and options". A resolution of the General Assembly also attaches due significance to the idea that the USSR and the United States should submit their joint initiative to the Committee on Disarmament to facilitate an early agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Similar ideas may be found in other working papers as well.

The majority of the statements and all the working papers emphasized that what the Committee should do is not to overtake but to help the ongoing bilateral negotiations. We think this is the key question of the problem. In this respect we entirely share the view expressed by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands in his statement yesterday that "the bilateral talks are of course potentially vital to our discussion in this Committee".

The Committee -- in our opinion -- should under no circumstances undertake an enterprise which may have a disadvantageous influence on the bilateral negotiations. My delegation, like many others, is not convinced at this stage without further consideration that the setting up of an ad hoc working group would facilitate an advance in the bilateral talks.

There is no common agreement in the Committee on several questions of substance. This fact is well reflected in the statements made during the consideration of the issue, and in the more than a hundred working papers referred to several times during the debate. Obviously, before the Committee could start to draft a convention we have to come to an understanding on how to select concrete subjects to be negotiated, what could be the most effective methods to be applied. In other words, that is the natural logical order of things that we have to define first precise tasks -- the immediate ones --, and then to find the most suitable ways, methods, as well as the most convenient organizational framework for the fulfilment of these tasks. Another

(Mr. Domokcs, Hungary)

indispensable requirement to accommodate negotiations in the Committee with the bilateral talks in order to reach the objective expressed and emphasized by many delegations is that they should mutually help each other and advance the negotiations aimed at the elaboration of the convention.

I would like to be very clear. We are not against the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. But we consider it an absolute necessity to prepare the negotiations well, to see clearly the tasks of the following months or sessions in this respect and also the possibilities and limits of the negotiations. It is also important to clarify and to agree upon that the negotiations do not necessarily, not in each phase and in a direct way, mean the drafting of the convention. There could also be some preparatory work, as an organic part of a negotiating process on the convention in question. We are convinced that there could be several issues to be negotiated in the Committee. The distinguished representatives of Sweden and the Netherlands have mentioned some possible subjects of negotiation in their recent statements. The Committee, after consultation, could well define them.

My delegation therefore, together with many others, is of the opinion that during the very short time left for us in the present session of the Committee we should not take a final decision on this subject. Further examination is required, in order that the Committee may formulate its final position on the basis of a thorough analysis of the circumstances and preconditions. We might return to this later, during the summer session.

The distinguished representative of Poland, Ambassador Sujka, in his statement of 24 April suggested that an informal contact group should be set up with the mandate that, after appropriate consultations, it should submit its suggestions for the consideration of the Committee as early as possible at the second part of the current session.

This proposal is in conformity with our position, and therefore we fully support it.

Several delegations made reference to the "Compilation of Material on Chemical Weapons from CCD Working Papers and Statements, 1972-76" prepared and circulated by the Secretariat on 11 March 1977. I would like to associate myself with those delegations which expressed their appreciation of that work. I think it would be useful -- and I would like to propose it -- to update that material perhaps by the beginning of the Committee's summer session, to add to it the substance of those working papers and other contributions which have been submitted to the Committee since 1976.

Concluding my statement I would like to express my hope that the Committee, after careful consideration and consultations, will be in a position during the summer session to find the forms and means facilitating in the most effective way the early prohibition of chemical weapons.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Hungary, Ambassador Domokos, for his statement. I wish also to thank him for his kind words to me personally and to my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Thomson.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): I wish to begin my remarks today by noting that I am speaking on behalf of the United States of America, one party to the current bilateral negotiations on chemical weapons. The delegation of the United States has listened to, and studied, with great interest and attention proposals put forward by the Group of 21, as well as those of Italy and the Netherlands concerning the subject of a ban on chemical weapons and the best way to reach that goal. These proposals are still further evidence of the importance which the international community attaches to this question, an importance which for our part is symbolized by the negotiations currently underway. Furthermore, the delegation of the United States understands and, indeed, sympathizes with the concerns which led to the introduction of these proposals. At the same time, we would hope that others would be equally understanding of our concern that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the USSR, which we see as the essential path to a multilateral convention, proceed to the resolution of key outstanding issues between our two countries.

As we understand the present situation, there are basically three proposals before the Committee on Disarmament:

(1) That there now be established an ad hoc working group to elaborate a draft convention;

(2) That the United States and the USSR now make a report to the Committee on Disarmament on the areas in which agreement has been reached in the field of chemical weapons as well as the outstanding issues on which agreement has eluded us;

(3) An informal contact group to "define further the methods and forms of the Committee's work."

All the representatives in this Committee are experienced negotiators. As such, we recognize that there are times when a thorough airing of issues and national positions can provide an opportunity for creative diplomacy leading the way to agreement. However, we also recognize that there are moments when a public elaboration of such national positions can make the task of diplomacy more difficult,

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

by reducing flexibility and concentrating efforts on defence of national positions. Clearly, the determination of which of these two stages obtains at this moment is a question of judgement, not of right or wrong.

In reaching our judgement, we are aware of the special responsibilities incumbent upon the United States and the USSR. After careful consideration, we have arrived at the view that the proposal to create an ad hoc working group which would elaborate a draft convention as well as the request fully to inform such a group of the areas in which agreement had been reached and of the issues which are still outstanding would hinder rather than assist the bilateral process. We recognize that others, whose sincerity we do not in any way question, are of a different opinion. In such a situation, we must remain faithful to our own judgements, with a heightened sense of responsibility for the positions we take. Nonetheless, we have listened with care to the expositions made by our colleagues. While we think a report on the status of the bilateral negotiations might not be helpful at this time, we will now undertake to present such a report at the appropriate time during the second part of our annual session. Further, beyond whatever action the Committee may take at this time, the United States will carefully review the proposals introduced recently in this body with a view to identifying those areas in which essential multilateral activity to reach our objective of a ban on chemical weapons might begin without, at the same time, rendering the bilateral negotiations even more difficult.

It is with some caution that the United States delegation now conveys this decision, for we cannot be at all certain of the outcome of our review and we have no desire to mislead the Committee or to create somehow the impression that we have an acceptable approach to this legitimate concern in hand. We have listened, and we will make a serious effort to respond to what we have heard.

One common theme in our discussions of the last two days was the need for more extensive informal consultations. Another appears to be that, whatever decision we should take at this time, we could not really begin to implement such a

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

decision until this summer. In this context, the delegation of the United States wonders if our common purpose would best be served by creating a group to "define further the methods and forms of the Committee's work." I thought we were in the process of doing precisely that, and somehow, I doubt that placing a new chapeau on our efforts will lead to a substantively different outcome. I certainly would not wish my remarks to be interpreted as an unwillingness to engage in consultations, since the delegation of the United States has never insisted on a formal structure to consult with colleagues and we do not so insist at this time. Given the differing perceptions as to the area of substantive accord and difference between the proposal of the Group of 21 and that of my distinguished colleague from Poland, I think that a further exposition of the import of each proposal would be advisable so we all share a common understanding and frame of reference when we return to this subject during the second half of our 1979 session.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation takes a highly positive view of the fact that the Committee on Disarmament has decided to devote part of its spring session to the consideration of the question of prohibition of chemical weapons. This is a token of the great importance which the States members of the Committee attach to that question. And indeed, in terms of urgency it has come to occupy one of the foremost places among the principal problems of disarmament.

In the past few years the Committee on Disarmament has had before it more than a few concrete and interesting proposals concerning the prohibition of chemical weapons. All of them provide a good deal of material for further work. But, at the same time, they demonstrate the complexity of the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons because they reflect essential differences in the approaches of different States to certain questions.

At the present session of the Committee, too, the latest working documents on chemical weapons were submitted for our attention. The Soviet delegation fully understands the interest shown in this matter by many States members of the

(Mr. Israelyan, USSR)

Committee, their concern, their desire to achieve constructive results as soon as possible. Indeed, one of the particular features of the problem we are considering this week is its universality. It touches upon the interests of the widest range of countries, inasmuch as there is a chemical industry practically everywhere and, at the same time, the possibility of creating and developing a chemical military potential.

Quite naturally the question arises as to the most expedient manner of organizing the Committee's work on the prohibition of chemical weapons. That is, in substance, as we understand, the principal object of the proposals most recently submitted to the Committee. I have in mind the working papers by Italy, the Netherlands and the Group of 21 and also the ideas expressed in statements by the representatives of India, Canada, Japan and a number of other countries. As I have already said, we view the motives for the above-mentioned proposals with great sympathy.

At the same time, a number of questions arise in connexion with these proposals. These questions should be taken duly into account with a view to finding the most efficient forms of work which will facilitate progress in this important matter.

For example, it would hardly be proper if we failed to give attention to the circumstance that two members of the Committee -- the Soviet Union and the United States of America -- have for a number of years past been conducting detailed bilateral negotiations on the question of prohibition of chemical weapons, at which, albeit slowly, some progress is being achieved.

In the course of these bilateral negotiations, which we regard as an important step towards the conclusion of an international convention, we are endeavouring to take full account of the international community's legitimate concern to obtain prohibition of chemical weapons as early as possible. But we cannot simply share the optimism of those who consider that some kind of "parallel" conduct of negotiations in the Committee will be a simple and easy matter and will in itself have a beneficial effect upon the solution of the problem as a whole.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Thus, we have serious doubts concerning the proposal to establish an ad hoc working group for the elaboration of a draft convention. It seems to us that conditions for this are not yet ripe. As for the proposal that the participants in the bilateral negotiations should fully inform the Committee on matters in which agreement has been reached as well as issues still outstanding, it seems to us that putting this proposal into effect may harm the bilateral negotiations rather than facilitate them. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of presenting to the Committee an agreed report on the progress of the bilateral negotiations at an appropriate time, e.g. in the course of the second part of the current session of the Committee.

It would also be wrong to ignore the general state of the matter and, in particular, the fact that the positions of different States diverge seriously on many aspects.

In such circumstances it is necessary to work out a balanced approach towards organizing the further consideration of the problem of chemical weapons in the Committee and, in particular, to reflect on other possible approaches. In this connexion, the views of our Polish colleagues concerning an unofficial contact group seem to us to be of interest. The most efficacious and generally acceptable approaches could be defined with its help.

We understand, of course, that some other delegations have a different opinion, which we by no means intend to ignore. On the contrary, we propose to study with full attention the proposals put forward in the course of the Committee's current session. This also applies, in particular, to the question connected with defining the problems which could be considered at the multilateral level without detriment to the progress of the bilateral negotiations.

Naturally, our position on these questions will be determined in the light of various circumstances in the future. We shall, as in the past, seek the most efficient and efficacious methods of work of the Committee which might ensure the solving of one of the urgent problems of disarmament -- the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Mr. VOUTCV (Bulgaria): Since this is my first statement in a plenary meeting of the Committee this month, permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the high office of presiding over the Committee on Disarmament during the month of April. As a result of your efforts and the contribution by your distinguished predecessors, the distinguished representatives of Algeria, Argentina and Australia, the Committee has accomplished several important tasks, thus laying the ground for fruitful and purposeful negotiations.

Though we were left with little time for the detailed consideration of particular disarmament problems on the agenda of the Committee, we managed to concentrate our attention on two important questions in the disarmament field, that is item 2 of the agenda -- Cessation of nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, and item 4 -- Prohibition of chemical weapons.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the interest demonstrated by the Committee in the discussion of the problems of nuclear disarmament and particularly the attention paid to the joint initiative of the socialist countries contained in document CD/4 on the negotiations for the cessation of production of all types of nuclear weapons and for the gradual reduction of their stockpiles until their total destruction.

As to the second question in the programme of work for the first part of the annual session for 1979, namely the question of the ban on chemical weapons which is now under discussion, our delegation would like to express at this meeting certain considerations.

The Bulgarian delegation is fully aware of the importance of the chemical weapons problem. As has been noted by many of the preceding speakers, the socialist countries members of the CCD had initiated the discussion on this question and had introduced the first draft convention for the total elimination of this kind of weapons of mass destruction. Since then more than 100 different ideas in the form of comprehensive drafts or working papers dealing with certain specific problems have been presented to the Committee.

It is our deep conviction, however, that the bilateral United States-USSR negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons remain of paramount importance in the efforts to proscribe this kind of weapon. This is why, while sharing the common

(Mr. Voutov, Bulgaria)

fervent wish for a speedy solution to the problem of chemical weapons, we are inclined to appreciate their warnings on the complexities involved. To quote from the Joint United States-USSR Statement of 22 August 1978: "the issues involved in complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons are extremely complex. The political and technical issues involved are directly linked and thus must be dealt with at the same time. Developing an adequately verifiable disarmament measure which is designed to eliminate an entire class of weapons from the arsenals of States and which also affects one of the major industries in many countries is a task which requires great care".

The remarks of the distinguished representatives of the United States and the USSR yesterday, and the statements we have just listened to, are further confirmation of the adequate and precise description of the problem of chemical weapons in the above-mentioned quotation.

There has been a pronounced tendency in this Committee in recent months to intensify the search for new ideas and efforts in the field of chemical weapons ban. This is an understandable and positive tendency. We appreciate and understand the sincere aspirations of many delegations for timely and concrete results in the chemical weapons negotiations.

But as to the idea of creating a working group, we do not believe that the time has come for **such** a step to be taken. What we have heard from the distinguished representatives of the USSR and the United States clearly indicates to us that at this particular stage we are not in a position to contribute to their bilateral talks. I think that the Committee can ignore neither the importance of the negotiations between the two Powers nor the advice of their representatives who are deeply aware of the complications and difficulties of these important negotiations.

Before setting up a working group we have to agree upon the methods of work of such a group and of the mandate we are supposed to give to such a subsidiary body.

Taking all this into consideration, we fully support the proposal of the Polish delegation to create an informal contact group which, on the basis of all the

(Mr. Voutov, Bulgaria)

documents presented to the Committee, could carry out consultations as to the future methods and forms of work in the field of chemical weapons. Such consultations definitely could lead to more successful overcoming of the existing differences in the approach to the elaboration of a convention outlawing chemical weapons.

Having all this in mind, the Bulgarian delegation expresses its willingness and readiness to participate in such an informal contact group.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Bulgaria for his statement and for his kind words about myself and about my predecessor, Ambassador Thomson.

Mr. KAMANDA WA KAMANDA (Zaire) (translated from French): My first duty is a pleasant one, to address to you, Mr. Chairman, my sincere good wishes on your appointment to the Chair of this Committee on Disarmament. In more than one respect we are happy that the proceedings of this Committee are being guided by the representative of the Kingdom of Belgium, a country with which we are linked by a long tradition of friendship and co-operation, and we are convinced that your vast experience and your great qualities as a diplomat and your sensitive touch are a sure guarantee for the efficient conduct and happy outcome of our proceedings.

Nor should I fail to address my congratulations likewise to the Ambassador of Australia, your predecessor in the Chair of this Committee, and to tell him how greatly we appreciate the sense of responsibility and negotiating skill which he displayed in that office, thanks to which the Committee has succeeded in adopting an agenda and programme of work. All this is a tribute to Ambassador Thomson's great experience and his proved merits; we are most grateful to him.

My country wishes furthermore to express its sympathy to the delegation of Yugoslavia and through it to the Government and people of that country for the sad events which have recently struck them.

Lastly, I would like to express to Mrs. Inga Thorsson, leader of the Swedish delegation, our very sincere condolence on the death of her husband -- a tragic loss to his family.

(Mr. Kamanda Wa Kamanda, Zaire)

The Government and people of the Republic of Zaire are profoundly concerned by the general and world-wide problem of disarmament. Zaire is a developing country, and consequently its social, economic and geo-political circumstances constitute a sufficient reason for its priority concern with development and security, in view of the calculations and designs of power, if not the will of power.

Our first concern is with development, because we have to deploy all necessary efforts to achieve the release of the vast financial resources used for military and warlike purposes to cope with the burden of poverty, distress, ignorance, disease and all kinds of inequality from which the populations of the developing countries in general and ours in particular suffer. We consider that the huge financial resources at present devoted to the arms race, to the manufacture of ever-more sophisticated weapons and to the invention of weapons of mass destruction might assuredly be applied to the achievement of great and noble objectives and to the construction of a world at peace in which co-operation in trust, equality and harmony would prevail on the basis of the recognized principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our second concern is security, because on it depends the harmonious planning of the progress and greater welfare of our populations in peace, whereas the unchecked armaments race, the excessive stock-piling and increase of the arsenals of war, the cynical improvement of certain weapons and missiles that cause massive and indiscriminate destruction, the invention and improvement of chemical bacteriological incendiary and so many other weapons threaten both peace and international security, the future and the survival of mankind.

These are the reasons why Zaire supported the terms of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations which define the framework and priorities for the negotiations on disarmament.

The ban on the use of chemical weapons was the subject of a Protocol which was adopted and signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925. Since then, however, the manufacture of these weapons -- because the manufacture was not expressly prohibited -- has not stopped. Because of the toxicity of these weapons, a distinctive characteristic of which is their special atrocity, and the risk -- increasing from year to year -- of their generalized use, fresh efforts have been undertaken to achieve by complementary international agreements the prohibition of the development, manufacture and stock-piling of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Kamanda Wa Kamanda, Zaire)

Naturally, we associate ourselves wholeheartedly with this approach, because throughout their long history and their national liberation struggle the peoples of our continent, in various places and at various times, have had the bitter experience of being victims of the use of these weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction which caused immeasurable damage both to the physical integrity of innocent populations and to their natural environment and resources, spreading destruction and desolation in territories that in any case suffer from underdevelopment, poverty and misery and so delaying for a long time their social and economic advancement.

Accordingly, in the same spirit we should welcome the bilateral negotiations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on chemical weapons which have been going on since 1976 and we hope that, thanks to the political will expressed on both sides, these negotiations will be crowned with success for the benefit of mankind. In the same spirit we are willing to support all constructive initiatives, whatever their source. In that spirit, too, we consider that the workshops organized by the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom have made a valuable contribution.

To supplement these bilateral efforts, however, we favour the approach which caused the General Assembly of the United Nations at its thirty-third session to recommend that the Committee on Disarmament should begin at the earliest possible opportunity negotiations on chemical weapons, and we are convinced that the negotiations in this Committee can in no way hamper the bilateral talks now proceeding.

While appreciating that in the general field of disarmament the Powers which manufacture and possess nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction have a special responsibility in the context of our deliberations, we consider that disarmament and a ban on the development, manufacture and stock-piling of certain weapons, notably chemical weapons, should be matters for all because they are of universal concern.

That is why in our opinion the new Committee on Disarmament, whose members include countries that are producers and countries that are not producers of weapons, both developed industrialized and developing countries, is the most appropriate forum for the conduct of the negotiations in conformity with the guidelines of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

(Mr. Kamanda Wa Kamanda, Zaire)

The problem is one of universal concern because it affects man as a whole, and it would be neither right nor appropriate to exclude steps and initiatives supplementing the discussions between free nations which rightly consider themselves concerned about the future of mankind, in so far as these initiatives have the same object as the bilateral negotiations.

Accordingly, we support document CD/11 of the Group of 21 which makes the sensible suggestion that a working group should be appointed to prepare a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, because we think that this is the most suitable method of initiating or starting these important negotiations.

In the light of the progress made in the bilateral talks and on the basis of the existing documentary material, the working group should identify the elements to be embodied in a convention and consider the important question of effective verification based on an appropriate combination of national and international measures that would be mutually complementary and capable of ensuring the effective respect of the ban.

After the entry into force in 1975 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stock-piling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, all the objective conditions are fulfilled, in our opinion, for the purpose of starting negotiations on a convention prohibiting chemical weapons which would be the natural and indispensable counterpart of the other convention.

Convinced that we are all aware of the need to safeguard our culture and civilization in their purest form, we hope that, thanks to a general momentum of human solidarity, the negotiations on chemical weapons will not be impeded by delay and procedural debate which often are the thin disguise for selfish interests and that they will move promptly in the direction we all desire.

This will be proof of our common determination to serve mankind and to confront the many complex challenges of the closing years of this century.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Zaire for his statement. On more than one score, I can assure you, I was appreciative of the congratulations that you addressed to me as Chairman. I thank you also for the tribute that you paid to my predecessor, Ambassador Thomson.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I am not proposing in my statement today to add anything new to the abundant documentary material concerning the item of the elimination of chemical weapons that is at the Committee's disposal, for under rule 39 of the rules of procedure all the documents of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament may be referred to as though they were part of the Committee's own documentation.

All we would like to do is to draw attention to some facts which, owing to their special significance, ought at all times to be present in our minds as we discuss the subject.

I would mention first that a little more than 10 years ago, as is stated in the report for 1978 of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament approved on 28 August of that year, that Committee "agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare".

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his part, made the following statement in the Introduction to his annual report dated 24 September 1968:

"The question of chemical and biological weapons has been overshadowed by the question of nuclear weapons, which have a destructive power several orders of magnitude greater than that of chemical and biological weapons. Nevertheless, these too are weapons of mass destruction regarded with universal horror. In some respects they may be even more dangerous than nuclear weapons because they do not require the enormous expenditure of financial and scientific resources that are required for nuclear weapons ... I therefore welcome the recommendation of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to the General Assembly that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare. I believe that such a study, which would explore and weigh the dangers of chemical and biological weapons, would prove to be a most useful undertaking at the present time."

On 20 December 1968 the General Assembly, echoing the foregoing statements, adopted its resolution 2454 A (XXIII) by which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of qualified consultant experts, a report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effects of their possible use.

In conformity with that decision, 14 experts appointed by the Secretary-General, nationals of as many countries in four different continents, prepared the report

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

asked for which received a most favourable welcome in the Assembly and whose conclusions include the following three:

"Because chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons are unpredictable, in varying degree, either in the scale or duration of their effects and because no certain defence can be planned against them, their universal elimination would not detract from any nation's security. Once any chemical or bacteriological (biological) weapon had been used in warfare, there would be a serious risk of escalation, both in the use of more dangerous weapons belonging to the same class and in the use of other weapons of mass destruction. In short, the development of a chemical or bacteriological (biological) armoury, and a defence, implies an economic burden without necessarily imparting any proportionate compensatory advantage to security. And, at the same time, it imposes a new and continuing threat to future international security.

The general conclusion of the report can thus be summed up in a few lines. Were these weapons ever to be used on a large scale in war, no one could predict how enduring the effects would be and how they would affect the structure of society and the environment in which we live. This overriding danger would apply as much to the country which initiated the use of these weapons as to the one which had been attacked, regardless of what protective measures it might have taken in parallel with its development of an offensive capability. A particular danger also derives from the fact that any country could develop or acquire, in one way or another, a capability in this type of warfare, despite the fact that this could prove costly. The danger of the proliferation of this class of weapons applies as much to the developing as it does to developed countries.

The momentum of the arms race would clearly decrease if the production of these weapons were effectively and unconditionally banned. Their use, which could cause an enormous loss of human life, has already been condemned and prohibited by international agreements, in particular the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and, more recently in resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The prospects for general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and hence for peace throughout the world, would brighten significantly if the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) agents intended for purposes of war were to end and if they were eliminated from all military arsenals."

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

Since the time when this report by the group of experts, which was approved unanimously, was transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 30 June 1969 about 10 years have elapsed in the course of which the following developments have occurred:

(1) The General Assembly approved another 14 resolutions in which it stressed regularly the urgency of reaching early agreement on effective means for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and for their destruction, purposes which my delegation usually sums up in the words "elimination of chemical weapons".

(2) The annex to one of these resolutions -- resolution 2826 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971 -- reproduced the text of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction which, as you know, entered into force on 26 March 1975 and the preamble to which expressly recognized that the Convention should be regarded as "a first possible step towards the achievement of agreement on effective measures also for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons" and which further expressed the determination of the States parties "to continue negotiations to that end".

(3) A classified index of hundreds of specific references to the various elements of the elimination of chemical weapons considered in the CCD during its deliberations in the five years that elapsed between 1972 and 1976 was prepared by the secretariat in a most useful working paper dated 11 March 1977. A similar wealth of analogous references is given in the verbatim records of the plenary meetings and above all of the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

(4) Between 16 March 1970 and 31 August 1978 -- the date on which it held its last meeting -- altogether 79 documents were submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament; the titles of the first 78 of these documents are given in the secretariat's "tabulation of documents of the CCD classified according to subjects 1962-1978"; and the last of these documents, i.e. CCD/577 dated 22 August 1978, is reproduced in volume III of the report of the CCD for 1978.

(5) Among these many working papers there are no fewer than three full draft conventions: that sponsored by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania and the USSR dated 28 March 1972 (CCD/361); the draft submitted by Japan dated 30 April 1974 (CCD/420); and the draft submitted by the United Kingdom dated 6 August 1976 (CCD/512).

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

(6) In the Final Document which was approved by consensus on 30 June 1978 and which sums up the conclusions of the first special session devoted to disarmament the General Assembly has made the following emphatic statement:

"The complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction represent one of the most urgent measures of disarmament. Consequently, the conclusion of a convention to this end, on which negotiations have been going on for several years, is one of the most urgent tasks of multilateral negotiations. After its conclusion, all States should contribute to ensuring the broadest possible application of the convention through its early signature and ratification."

(7) The Committee on Disarmament, which started its deliberations less than three months ago, has already received three working papers dealing with the elimination of chemical weapons: that submitted on 6 February 1979 by the delegation of Italy (CD/5), in which it was suggested that not later than the beginning of its summer session the Committee should appoint an ad hoc working group to deal with the topic with which we are concerned; a paper submitted on the same date by the delegation of the Netherlands (CD/6); and the paper submitted by all the members of the Group of 21 (CD/11) which, like the one I mentioned first, proposes the establishment of an ad hoc working group.

My short recapitulation makes it unnecessary, I think, to explain further why the delegation of Mexico -- which in 1973 was one of the 10 delegations of what was then called the Group of 15 to co-sponsor working paper CCD/400 -- has been supporting from the beginning the Swedish delegation's initiative which culminated in the submission of working paper CD/11 by the Group of 21. Hence, I shall do no more than re-emphasize our belief that the establishment of an ad hoc working group open to the participation of all States members of the Committee as proposed in that document would not -- as the paper itself says -- hamper or hinder in any way whatsoever the bilateral talks which have been going on for so long between the United States and the Soviet Union. On the contrary, we firmly believe that the parallel negotiations would be of assistance to each other. In addition to recovering in this way, in connexion with a subject of manifest universal interest, the functions expressly entrusted to it by the Final Document of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as "a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", the Committee would, we are sure, make an invaluable contribution to the happy culmination of such negotiations.

Mr. OGISO (Japan): Since this is the first time I take the floor during the month of April I wish to associate myself, first of all, with all the previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chair. The Committee has already achieved a great deal under your able leadership. I also wish to express my appreciation to Ambassador Thomson who presided the Committee last month in his usual able manner.

It was not my original intention to take the floor at today's meeting, but having heard the statements made by the United States and the Soviet Union, I am bound to make a brief intervention.

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the distinguished delegates of the United States and the Soviet Union for giving due regard to the proposal I made in my statement of 27 March this year concerning the progress report to be made by two negotiating Powers on the present status of their bilateral negotiation on a chemical weapons ban.

Having listened with careful attention to their respective statements I must confess that I was very much disappointed by the lack of understanding on the part of the two delegations for the progress report on the bilateral negotiations on chemical weapons.

As has been pointed out by a number of delegations in the plenary as well as in informal meetings, we are now facing the situation where the CCD and this Committee have not been able to enter into negotiations on the chemical weapons ban treaty, since the joint initiatives were declared by the United States and the Soviet Union at their summit talks in July 1974.

In our deliberations we have never maintained that the bilateral negotiations should be replaced by the multilateral negotiations in this Committee. What we have been convinced of, however, is that in the light of the little progress made in the bilateral negotiations since 1974, it is high time for us to explore the ways and means that would contribute to progress in the multilateral negotiations on the chemical weapons ban treaty, taking fully into account the progress and the difficulties involved in the bilateral talks. It was in this conviction that my delegation made the proposal on 27 March that the Committee should decide to request the United States and the USSR to make a progress report to the Committee before the end of this part of its annual session, so that the Committee may be in a position to enter into more substantial considerations in the summer session.

(Mr. Ogiso, Japan)

The working paper presented by the Group of 21 (CD/11) also requests that the States participating in the bilateral negotiations should inform the proposed ad hoc working group on the state of negotiations, indicating the areas in which agreements have been reached as well as the issues which are still outstanding.

My delegation, as I have stated before, fully realizes the importance of the bilateral negotiations for the eventual successful conclusion of the chemical weapons ban treaty and has no intention whatsoever to replace the bilateral negotiations by a different form of negotiation. We can appreciate, too, that final agreement on those areas where provisional agreement has been reached at present between the two Powers may sometimes be dependent on the outcome of the negotiations on still-unsolved outstanding issues, and we are ready to accept certain agreed provisions as provisional without taking them as their final commitment. If the present status of negotiation is reported, even in a provisional or conditional manner, it will be a great encouragement to the other delegations in the Committee to put forward new views in order to help to solve the outstanding problems.

My delegation still believes that it is possible for the United States and the Soviet Union to make a progress report to the Committee without interfering with the progress of their bilateral negotiations.

Repeating this proposal today I am also taking into account the slightest difference between the status of the bilateral negotiations on a chemical weapons ban and the trilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban (CTB). In the case of CTB the number of countries which are capable of test explosions is rather limited, but in the case of chemical weapons, there are a number of countries, including not only all developed countries but also developing countries, which are capable of developing such weapons.

If a chemical weapons ban should be negotiated, it is to the benefit of the world community, including the two super-Powers, to secure as wide a participation as possible.

My delegation would therefore like to renew its request to the United States and the Soviet Union to give further consideration to this question of a progress report and make best efforts to present a progress report on the bilateral negotiations to the Committee at the earliest possible opportunity in the second part of this annual session.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Japan, Ambassador Ogiso, for his statement.

Distinguished delegates, I have four more speakers on my list. In view of the late hour and because several delegates have asked me not to prolong our meeting this morning, I wish to propose that we interrupt our work and resume this afternoon. May I then suggest that we should resume our work in plenary meeting this afternoon at 3 p.m.?

If there are no objections, I suggest that we should suspend the meeting now and resume at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Distinguished delegates, we shall now resume the work of the thirty-first plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. AHMED (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, you have already conveyed condolences on behalf of all of us to Mrs. Inga Thorsson, through the Swedish delegation, on her irreparable loss. However, I would like to take this opportunity to convey personally our delegation's condolences, through the Swedish delegation to Mrs. Thorsson.

I also wish to express our sympathy to the delegation of Yugoslavia for the loss of human life and property caused by the recent earthquake in that country.

As recommended in resolution 33/59A of the General Assembly, the Committee has at last begun consideration of the two substantive priority issues. We have now before us the fourth item on the agenda, which is also the second item on our programme of work for the first part of the current session. The Committee must not relent or merely content itself with general debate and the production of more routine working papers.

It is now virtually impossible to embark on any consideration of the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons without reiterating what has been said before. Hardly any new approach can be suggested that is not a modification or adaptation of a previous one. As has already been pointed out in various working papers and in various statements, there is tremendous background material available. Our efforts should therefore be fully geared towards serious and deep consideration of this item, with a view to the preparation of a draft convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

(Mr. Ahmad, Nigeria)

The binding commitments contained in the eighth paragraph of the Preamble and in articles VII and VIII of the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons of 1971 are unambiguous. It is our good faith which is ambiguous and which remains to be tested. We do not therefore, need to go into the detailed historical analysis of efforts to achieve the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is sufficient to recall the high hopes of the CCD during 1977 and early 1978. In 1977 there were indications that the CCD was registering substantive progress by providing a comprehensive elaboration of technical matters involved in banning of chemical weapons. Furthermore, the bilateral negotiations of the United States and the USSR were a focus of much attention. Great hopes were expressed at the time of the 32nd General Assembly that a draft convention would be forthcoming in time for consideration by the special session on disarmament, and this was reflected in the resolution which was adopted at the time. Those high hopes were not fulfilled.

My delegation is of the firm view that the Committee on Disarmament should adopt the necessary organizational machinery to begin elaboration of a draft convention, during this session, on the prohibition of chemical weapons. As a party to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the 1971 Convention, and as a co-sponsor of document CD/11 we are committed to working in that direction, and we think there is justification to believe that most other members of the Committee at least recognize that the time is ripe, that a draft convention is within reach.

There are more similarities than divergencies in the three proposed working documents on prohibition of chemical weapons recently placed before the Committee. Broadly speaking all agree on the following elements:-

First, the setting up of an informal subsidiary organ of the Committee, open to all members and with participation by non-members;

Secondly, the elaboration by the subsidiary organ of a comprehensive document the end result of which will be a draft convention;

Thirdly, the subsidiary organ should be set up during the course of the current session and should commence its work this session;

(Mr. Ahmed, Nigeria)

Fourthly, the subsidiary organ would benefit from information regarding the state of bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers or their individual or joint views;

Fifthly, it should take into account existing proposals (including those submitted to the CCD) and future proposals;

Sixthly, it should identify areas of agreement and areas where disagreement still exists (and possible new elements for the formulation of scope and verification on a convention) or undertake "an in-depth consideration of the unresolved problems standing in the way of an agreement." Furthermore, all the working papers explicitly or implicitly recognize that the bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers could continue at the same time as the multilateral negotiations.

These elements certainly provide a basis for the Committee to take a decision which will make possible the proper and detailed consideration, with or without experts, of the technical aspects of a draft convention. The material available in the three draft conventions submitted to the CCD since 1972, as well as in the working paper CCD/400 submitted by the group of 15, and in the "compilation of material on chemical weapons from CCD working papers and statements 1972-76", would, along with any new documents to be submitted, allow the ad hoc working group proposed by the Group of 21 to start negotiating and drafting.

Due consideration will have to be given to the issue of verification and control; possibly a combination of both national and international measures would be needed -- and suitable common ground might be found. In this regard, we would like to register our appreciation to the Governments of the United Kingdom and Federal Republic of Germany for arranging visits to chemical plants in their respective countries. We also recognize the value of the visits as confidence-building measures. The issue of the scope of prohibition

(Mr. Ahmed, Nigeria)

is equally a vital and important aspect which has to be settled. It would probably be necessary to prohibit not only chemical weapons themselves but also specific chemical agents and means of delivery. Another issue will be whether to adopt a comprehensive or gradual approach. The question of criteria would be very significant in settling all these technical matters. Should the criteria be based on purpose or intention or on quantity? Should the basis be verifiability or the effect and chemical property? The basis will probably be a combination of all these. We are convinced that nothing short of a working group can be properly seized with all these issues, because what the Committee needs now is not another working paper, there are already enough of them, but a draft convention based on common agreements.

We have heard predictions about the development of new technology which could overtake efforts at chemical weapons disarmament. Thus any time lost without a convention moves us closer to an avoidable but potentially catastrophic and escalating impasse of a chemical weapons balance of terror. Worse, because of the ability of so many countries to acquire chemical weapons the balance will be a very delicate one. It is common knowledge as well as on record from experts' study that it is impossible to limit the effect of chemical weapons within any border once hostilities start. The area of effect of chemical weapons is said to be less predictable than that of conventional high explosives weapons. They are thus less amenable to limited or controlled use. The risk of escalation entailed is much higher with chemical weapons leading to "less controlled and less controllable" hostilities. The conclusion is that "uncontrollable hostilities cannot be reconciled with the concept of military security." In addition, being a major threat to civilian populations and their sources of food and water, the use of chemical weapons cannot be reconciled with national and international security.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): Mr. Chairman, I hope you and this very august Committee will forgive me if I do not read out a prepared statement. I believe it is not improper to intervene from time to time and express ones views and react to the evolving situation, particularly when one does not have the time to prepare a statement since today is most probably going to be the final plenary of the Committee before it adjourns.

We are told that the delegations of Finland and Switzerland are going to make statements in our debate today, and I would like to express the satisfaction of my delegation that two countries outside of the membership of this Committee have decided to make their own contributions to our work. I hope that their example will be followed by other members, or other countries, so that the collective wisdom and the collective force of the international opinions could be brought to bear on our work.

The subject of chemical weapons was dealt with by me during my earlier intervention. As early as last year, I had in my statement declared that India does not have chemical weapons in its stocks and that we do not have any intention of going in for such stocks. In my statement on 8 February this year, I said that my delegation had the feeling that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union had for some reason or other slowed down as from the middle of last year. I am sad to note that my feeling was not unjustified. In fact it was more or less confirmed by the statements that we heard from the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union this morning. The distinguished Ambassador from the United States, Ambassador Fisher, said that he, or his delegation, was aware of the special responsibility incumbent on the United States and the USSR. I am happy to note this awareness, which in any case we never doubted. But I hope Ambassador Fisher would agree with me that it would have been more appropriate if the representatives of the United States and the USSR, in discharge of their special and heavy responsibilities, had chosen to intervene at an earlier occasion in our debate so that the rest of us could have benefited or profited from their statements.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

I think it was the distinguished Foreign Minister of France who had said at the inaugural session of our Committee that one must distrust words. One must judge by actions and not by words. I think it was a statement made in great seriousness by the distinguished Foreign Minister of France, and my delegation, in great appreciation of the seriousness of the approach of the French delegation, would like to remind our distinguished colleagues from the United States and the USSR that the rest of us are expecting some action, some concrete progress in the field of chemical disarmament. Statements of course are extremely important because they reflect the point of view and the clear positions of Governments, but we hope that the words would be followed up without any further delay with concrete action.

Now, the main purpose I have asked for the floor today is to address myself to some procedural questions which have been raised during our discussion on chemical weapons. It is generally agreed, I think, that the time is more than ripe for our Committee to take some decision of a procedural nature as to how to proceed on the substantive issues of chemical disarmament. The Group of 21 has put forward a proposal recommending the setting up of an ad hoc working group. The delegation of Poland has, I think, put forward a suggestion for the setting up of an informal contact group. The distinguished representative of Hungary made a suggestion this morning whereby the comprehensive paper produced by the Secretariat in March 1977 would be updated. I think it was the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands who suggested that this Committee before it adjourns for this part of the session, should fix two weeks in June or July for the consideration of the question of chemical disarmament. My delegation is glad that different kinds of proposals have been put forward, and we appreciate the spirit in which all these proposals have been made. Our regret is that all these proposals, except that made by the Group of 21, have been made somewhat late in the day, so that we do not have the necessary time for informal consultations, etc., to take a concrete decision at

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

this session. The Indian delegation had suggested some time ago, quite some time ago, that the Committee could decide to take up the question of chemical weapons before it agreed on the agenda and programme of work. If our suggestion had been accepted -- and we could not understand the reluctance of some delegations to accept our suggestion -- we would have had more time to consider all the questions in detail and perhaps by now, Mr. Chairman, under your leadership, we might have been able to come to some fruition of our work. I might straight away say, in regard to the various suggestions put forward by delegations, that we support the suggestion made by Ambassador Demokos this morning, namely that the Secretariat bring out an updated version of the March 1977 paper. It will be of use to us in our future work in the ad hoc working group which we hope will be set up before too long.

I was encouraged by what the distinguished representative of the United States said this morning and he will note that I am speaking of the positive element from his statement, instead of the negative one. He did say that the United States will "carefully review the proposal introduced recently in this body with a view to identifying those areas in which essential multilateral activity to reach our objective of a ban on chemical weapons might begin". Of course, he goes on to say "without, at the same time, rendering the bilateral negotiations even more difficult", but I think that is not an operative part of the statement. As far as I am concerned, the operative part is that the United States is prepared to look into the proposals with a view to identifying those areas in which multilateral activity could begin on the question of chemical disarmament. I think this is a helpful and perhaps a hopeful indication from one of the two negotiating partners. The distinguished representative of the USSR unfortunately decided not to circulate the text of his statement, so I am somewhat handicapped in responding to his intervention. But if I am not mistaken, he said that his delegation had serious doubts, and that the time was not ripe enough to set up an ad hoc working group of the Committee to look into the question of chemical weapons. Here again I would like to look at the positive aspects rather than the negative ones, and note

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

that the Soviet delegation is not opposed to the proposal to set up an ad hoc working group of the Committee. It seems that the Soviet delegation has some doubts about the timing or the ripeness of the setting up of an ad hoc group at this time and naturally my delegation would respect the views of the Soviet delegation, as indeed of any other delegation, on any question before the Committee. I had said in my statement earlier during the session that the ad hoc group could be set up now, or early during the second part of the annual session for this year. While naturally we would prefer that such a working group be set up now, my delegation would not object to postponing the setting up of a group until early in the second part of our annual session. But I sincerely hope that postponing the setting up of the working group until a later date would not necessarily prevent the United States and the Soviet delegations from agreeing in principle now to the setting up of such a group at a later date. Certainly the mandate, the terms of reference, of the working group would have to be gone into, that would need some time, and we could do so profitably either this afternoon or tomorrow morning and again very early in June, when we resume our work. But I trust and I would appeal to all the members -- and there are very few of them in this Committee who have reservations -- to consider the possibility of taking a decision at this session in principle to set up a working group very early during the second part of our session.

I would like to support also the suggestion which was made by Ambassador Fein, that we fix two weeks during the second part of our annual session to consider the question of chemical weapons. I am of course aware that we have to draw up our programme of work for each part of our annual session, and presumably this will have to be done when we resume our work on 12 June. But I understand that some delegations would wish our Committee to decide as to when the question of chemical weapons would be taken up. My delegation is not really enthusiastic about having the kind of informal meetings that we used to have last year and the year before -- informal meetings of the Committee with the participation of experts. I think there is no need really to invite experts en bloc from all the delegations for the purposes of our work, but if some delegation or delegations wish to bring experts

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

with them when the question is considered, certainly it is their right to do so and we would certainly support their desire to do so. For this purpose, if it is the general view that we fix right now specific dates in June or July for the consideration of the question of chemical weapons, my delegation would certainly have no objection to it.

I would like to say a few words about the Polish proposal about the informal contact group. I appreciate the spirit in which the suggestion has been made and welcome the motivation behind this suggestion. Certainly the suggestion has been made with a view to finding some common ground, I suppose, between two points of view which appear to be divergent from each other, but which are not, perhaps, all that much apart from each other.

We have some difficulty with the Polish suggestion. First of all, our rules of procedure do not mention anything about informal contact groups. Our rules of procedure speak of working groups, or informal meetings and private meetings, etc., but there is no reference in the rules of procedure to informal contact groups. There is a reference in the rules of procedure to such additional arrangements which the Committee might wish to agree upon, but there is no specific reference to informal contact groups in the rules of procedure. Now, my delegation would be the last to stand in the way of the proposal on procedural grounds. The Committee is the master of its own business. Anyway, the chapeau in our rules of procedure is "unless the Committee decides otherwise". So if the Committee decides to have an informal contact group, certainly it could be done, but if it is going to be an informal contact group, then there is no need for a decision by the Committee. It is always open to delegations, including my delegation, to set up an informal contact group of our own any time we want to and we could meet throughout the inter-session period to see how we can make progress in our work. But the setting up of an informal contact group does not need any decision from the Committee. The second difficulty that we have in clearly understanding the utility of the proposal, is a substantive one. We feel -- when I say "we", I should perhaps make it clear that I am not applying "we" in the regal sense to myself, but that "we" refers also to several other

(Mr. Gharokhan, India)

delegations who have the same point of view and whom I have consulted on this question -- that the difficulty which some delegations have about an ad hoc working group should logically apply also to an informal contact group, because if the delegations, specifically the negotiating partners, are not willing to share with us their difficulties, or the progress they have made, then the difficulty would or should apply also to the forum of an informal contact group. This, for one simple reason, that the ad hoc working group also would be informal in the sense that no records would be kept of the proceedings of ad hoc working group, and it would be an open and very informal forum for any States, including in particular the representatives of the United States and the USSR, to talk to us and, so to speak, to take us into some confidence about the state of their negotiations. I note that Ambassador Fisher said this morning that he did not think that a report on the status of the bilateral negotiations would be helpful at this stage, or at this time. Nevertheless, he went on to say they would undertake now to present such a report at the appropriate time during the second part of our annual session, and I welcome this part of Ambassador Fisher's statement. So if an ad hoc working group is set up, it should be possible for the United States delegation and also the delegation of the USSR, to present a suitable report or progress report to the working group during the second part of our annual session. In summary, we believe that the ad hoc working group which we have proposed is the appropriate forum for taking up the question of chemical weapons, and not really the proposed informal contact group. As I said earlier, we have not found any real opposition to the proposal for setting up an ad hoc working group. We hope that a decision will be taken now to set up an ad hoc working group, and that the timing of the actual setting up of the group could be left till the very early part of our second part of our annual session.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): It gives me great pleasure as Chairman to note that two representatives of countries that are not members of the Committee are to have the opportunity of addressing the Committee.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Finland, Ambassador Rajakowski.

Mr. RAJAKOWSKI (Finland) (translated from French): Allow me to say, first, how pleased I am to be taking the floor under the chairmanship of the distinguished representative of Belgium, a country with which Finland has traditionally maintained good and close relations and whose efforts in the field of disarmament have often coincided with my own country's.

[The speaker continues in English]

I would like to express my gratitude through you, Mr. Chairman, to all members of the Committee on Disarmament who have been good enough to allow my delegation to make a statement as a first delegation not a member of this Committee. As is well known, my Government has over the past years emphasized, on many occasions, the importance to preserve the negotiating character of the predecessor of this Committee, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as well as the Committee on Disarmament itself. When the structure and modalities of the negotiating forum in Geneva were changed in the Final Document of the special session of the Assembly on disarmament my Government took a very restrictive position as far as the participation of the non-members is concerned. The Committee should not be yet another forum where delegations can explain their own national policies of disarmament; its nature should be strictly preserved as a negotiating body. My Government felt furthermore that delegations in Geneva not members of the Committee should participate in its work only when they felt that they could be of help and assistance to the Committee.

One of the fields where my delegation thinks Finland could contribute to common endeavours is that of chemical weapons which is now under discussion in this Committee in accordance with the programme of work adopted on 12 April 1979. This is a field in which the Government of Finland has taken a special interest over many years. As early as 1972 the Finnish Government made a first practical contribution to the negotiations on a chemical weapons treaty. This initiative was taken in the firm belief that all nations, whether parties to multilateral negotiations or not, have a vital interest in promoting progress in disarmament. This is, we felt, particularly

(Mr. Rajakowski, Finland)

the case of chemical weapons, a question which has been on the agenda of multilateral disarmament negotiations for almost two decades and which is widely recognized as of high priority. It is commonplace to recall that, unlike nuclear weapons, chemical weapons are in the possession or in the reach of a vast number of countries and concern important national industries in many countries.

Finland thus initiated a research project on the role of instrumental analysis of chemical weapons agents in their verification. The goal of this project was, and still is, the creation of a national chemical weapons verification capacity, which could be put eventually to international use. We felt that such an instrumental and factual project could best suit a neutral country deeply concerned about the situation in the arms race. Verification though was, to our mind, not the only problem to be solved and agreed upon before the conclusion of a chemical weapons ban. Important as it is, it is still just one of the issues.

I have asked for the opportunity to make a statement here today mainly to explain what are the results so far of the research project. A working document (CD/14) has been distributed to members of this Committee which will further explain the stage of the Finnish study under way.

The working document is to a large extent self-explanatory. It gives inter alia a list of the working papers submitted by Finland to the CCD ever since 1972, starting with the definition of chemical warfare agents and technical possibilities for verification and control of chemical weapons and going gradually to the methodology of the chemical identification of such agents. In 1977 a general view of the most useful techniques for the organophosphorus warfare agents was presented to the CCD in the form of a booklet which was distributed to the delegations of the CCD as an annex to document CCD/544. I might mention that the booklet is still available and obtainable through the Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva. Later, in August 1978, another working document entitled "An Analytical Technique for the Verification of Chemical Disarmament -- Trace Analysis by Glass Capillary Gas Chromatography with Specific Detectors" was distributed to the delegations members of the CCD in document CCD/577.

My intention today is to explain to the members of the Committee what the results gained so far mean in more practical and, let us say, political terms.

(Mr. Rajakowski, Finland)

First, the Finnish project covers only one aspect of the verification issue, that is, the development of the analytical methods for the detection in samples of agents to be prohibited by a chemical weapons ban and thus creating capacity for verifying compliance with the treaty. The project does not address itself to the recommendation of the actual collection of samples, which would depend on the provisions of the treaty. Secondly, the Finnish project is focused on the verification of organophosphorus nerve agents which are generally considered to be the most potent chemical warfare agents.

Thirdly, the Finnish project has been conceived as a multipurpose one, both substantively and functionally. Substantively, the planned control capacity could be used in three different verification activities: (1) verification of the destruction of stocks, (2) verification of the non-production of chemical weapons, and (3) verification of their alleged use.

Functionally then, the capacity could be of service regardless of the modalities of verification to be agreed upon: (1) It could be used for national verification or any combination of national and international inspection; (2) it could be used in connexion with an investigation ordered by an international authority, say for example the Security Council of the United Nations pursuant to a complaint; and (3) it could meet some of the concern expressed by some developing countries about possible difficulties in carrying out verification by their national means only.

These are the considerations I wanted to offer to the Committee concerning the practical significance of the Finnish project, which is still under way. My delegation is ready to give more details and scientific data when this Committee is going to discuss, hopefully, the subject matter more thoroughly during its resumed session in June. My delegation would be happy to participate in the form the Committee itself deems most appropriate, be it in an ad hoc group established for the purpose or in official meetings of the Committee itself. We shall be able to provide more scientific expertise by inviting, if that were the wish of the Committee, a Finnish expert in the said chemical weapons verification project.

It is furthermore the intention of the Finnish Government to continue the project and to make available its subsequent results to the Committee on Disarmament; a further progress report is expected to be ready by next June. The work is at

(Mr. Rajakowski, Finland)

present concentrated on the following: (1) The development of reliable and standardizable verification procedures which have maximum sensitivity to detect even the slightest traces of chemicals to be prohibited (at the moment the detection limit is that of 1 nanogram per litre); (2) the preparation of suggestions for standardization of these techniques and procedures; and (3) the preparation of an extensive data bank and a handbook for rapid identification of potential chemical weapons agents and related chemicals in various samples.

As I stated earlier in this statement, the verification is only one of the issues that has to be solved and agreed upon before the conclusion of a chemical weapons ban treaty. We are fully aware of that fact. Nevertheless, we felt it appropriate to remind the distinguished members of this Committee of the efforts of a purely scientific nature which are being made in Finland by several laboratories, in particular in the department of chemistry of the University of Helsinki, under the direction of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and supervised by the Ministry's Advisory Board for Disarmament.

We are fully aware of the complexity of the problems arising in the negotiations on the treaty banning chemical weapons. That explains also, we understand, the very slow progress reported from the bilateral negotiations between the delegations of the USSR and the United States here in Geneva. We nevertheless hope that the joint initiative we have been awaiting for many years will soon appear, which would be an important step towards an agreement banning chemical weapons. This would be the first real disarmament agreement decreasing the stockpiles of existing weaponry.

I would like to conclude my statement by saying that my delegation has been strongly encouraged by the discussion on the question of chemical weapons which has taken place in this room during the last couple of days. It also shows the considerable efforts many countries have made and the deep interest all delegations in the Committee have shown in this problem. I have in mind, in particular, the three draft conventions which have been on the table for many years and a good number of working papers presented during this first session of the Committee. I have also in mind the initiatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom in inviting experts and diplomats to participate in a chemical weapons workshop. Both these visits were most useful and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of the workshop in the Federal Republic of Germany in which I had the pleasure to participate personally, together with a Finnish expert. May I be allowed to formulate a most earnest hope that the time will have come to unite all these efforts in order to achieve at last some tangible results in the field of chemical disarmament.

Mr. EXCHAQUET (Switzerland) (translated from French): The Swiss authorities wish to thank the Committee on Disarmament for giving them an opportunity to make a brief statement setting out their point of view on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

They are all the more grateful for this opportunity as Switzerland, not being a Member of the United Nations, is unable to take an active part in all the international negotiations on disarmament, and is often present merely as an observer of the immense and laudable efforts which are being made in this domain.

It was at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, last year in New York, that my country was last given an opportunity, thanks to the kindness of the delegations of Finland, Yugoslavia, Austria and Sweden, to inform the Members of the United Nations of its position and views on the question of disarmament (document A/S-10/AC.1/2 of 24 May 1970).

Allow me to recall here that the Geneva Protocol of 19 June 1925 for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare was signed by Switzerland on the selfsame day, and the Protocol was later ratified by my country on 12 July 1932. Similarly, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and **Toxin** Weapons and of Their Destruction of 10 April 1972 was signed by Switzerland on the Day of its adoption and then ratified on 4 May 1976.

It is common knowledge that my country possesses a very highly developed chemical industry, but it does not manufacture or stockpile any chemical weapons whatsoever. Our army is consequently equipped and trained solely to give protection against such weapons.

If, as the result of an attack on its independence, my country should be drawn into a war and if chemical weapons were used in such a conflict, the chief victim of those weapons would undoubtedly be the civilian population, because of its density. This apocalyptic vision looms over many other peoples as well, and would have consequences which would be not only contrary to all humanitarian considerations but to the dictates of common sense as well.

(Mr. Exchaquet, Switzerland)

In view of the suffering caused by poison gases in the First World War, the international community decided to prohibit them. The subsequent convention on the prohibition of biological weapons was the logical sequel to that step. The present status and future possibilities of chemistry and chemical technology hold out such dangers in the event of their use in wartime that the only way to avoid them is to prohibit chemical weapons altogether.

The Swiss authorities are fully aware of the extreme complexity of the problems which such a ban would imply. They have consequently given close consideration to the contributions already made on the subject by a number of delegations in your Committee to which they wish to express their gratitude.

My country realizes that the enforcement of a prohibition of chemical weapons would involve, in particular, extensive supervision, of the agreements which might be concluded. That is why Switzerland participated with great interest, last month, in the workshop organized in the Federal Republic of Germany on the subject of verification techniques.

In conclusion I would say that the federal authorities have every hope that the work of your Committee in this field will be brought to a successful conclusion in the near future. To the extent of its ability, the Swiss Government will collaborate fully in the implementation of a total prohibition of chemical weapons.

The meeting was suspended at 4.45 p.m.
and reconvened on Friday, 27 April 1979, at 5 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Distinguished delegates, I have the honour of re-opening the thirty-first official meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

We have come to the end of our deliberations and our discussions on the second topic of our programme of work, chemical weapons. We have had a fruitful exchange of views. As Chairman, I followed your discussions and debates with the greatest interest.

Still speaking as your Chairman, I wish to inform you of certain conclusions I have reached and of my own feelings in the light of the consultations I have had with the members of the Committee. About two weeks of the second part of this session should be devoted to the negotiation on chemical weapons on dates to be fixed as part of the programme of work that will be drawn up for the second part of the session. It is also my feeling as Chairman that, as from the beginning of the second part of the session, the Committee should continue

(The Chairman)

its consideration of all the proposals made to the Committee. These proposals deal principally with the methods and procedures to be adopted with a view to negotiating a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor?

If not, I have to inform you that I would like to suggest that the Committee should request the Secretariat to bring up to date the informal document "Compilation of material on chemical weapons from CCD working papers and statements 1972-1976" of 11 March 1977, and to circulate it as an official document of the Committee.

If there are no objections it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

Allow me to inform you also of the following. The distinguished members of the Committee will recall that at the beginning of this plenary meeting the Committee took note of the seventh interim report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to consider international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events. In accordance with that decision, the Secretariat will circulate that interim report as an official Committee document; it has so far been circulated under the symbol "Conference room paper 57/Revision I".

Do any delegations wish to take the floor?

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): I shall be very brief. I merely wish to have it placed on record that my delegation is really disappointed, and deplores the inability to reach agreement at least on a decision within the Committee as to how the subject of chemical weapons should continue to be dealt with.

I find truly lamentable the fact that it has not even been possible to establish machinery for use by the Committee in undertaking one of the most urgent tasks, a task for which it has received an express and precise mandate from the Assembly, and concerning which there is a general feeling that the question is sufficiently ripe for substantive negotiations.

I believe that, although we are just concluding the first part of our first session, all this is a hard blow to the Committee's credibility.

I think it will prove difficult to explain why or how, after four months of meetings, we have not even been able to reach agreement on the way in which this subject should be approached in future, a subject in relation to which, as I have said, the circumstances are the most favourable for advancing towards concrete

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

agreements, and a subject, moreover, which relates to a type of weapons which the few countries possessing them would never venture to employ; first, because they are prohibited, and second, because their utility would not stand up against the repudiation which the use of this type of weapon would encounter in world public opinion.

All this, from my delegation's point of view, is really lamentable; and we keenly deplore the fact that it has not been possible at least to adopt a decision establishing machinery: the machinery which the Committee would have to employ for the purpose of carrying out the express, precise and concrete mandate conferred upon it by the General Assembly in its resolution 3359A.

Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I have asked for the floor for two reasons: first, to express my delegation's opinion -- an opinion which, I am sure, is shared by a very considerable number of the Committee's members -- that the report which, as was promised to us yesterday, is to be presented to the Committee by the representatives of the two States which have been conducting bilateral talks on chemical weapons since 1974, should be submitted to us by a date as close as possible to that of the opening of the second part of the 1979 session. The reasons for this are of a practical nature, and they seem so obvious that there is no need for me to mention them.

The second reason for my asking for the floor is to express my delegation's view that the representatives of the three new members who have assumed the chairmanship of the Committee since January have displayed great proficiency in presiding over the Committee's deliberations. Their in all respects exemplary conduct of the proceedings demonstrates the valuable contribution which the injection of new blood, in this case that of Algeria, Australia and Belgium, has brought to this multilateral negotiating body. It also shows how wise have been the efforts of those delegations which, like that of Mexico, have for so many years proposed the establishment of a rotating chairmanship reflecting the principle of the sovereign equality of all the Committee's members.

To you in particular, Mr. Chairman, we express our gratitude and sincerest congratulations.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Thank you, Ambassador García Robles. I was most appreciative of the words that you addressed to the new members of the Committee and to myself.

Mr. THOMSON (Australia): Mr. Chairman, I intervened very briefly a little while ago to suggest that some more time might be left for consultations on a proposal that we made yesterday. I have received a very positive response to that proposal but we have not really had quite enough time to complete these and would hope, Sir, that it would be possible for my delegation to return to this matter very early in the new session.

Since I have the floor, Sir, may I also first of all express my deep appreciation for the remarks made by our elder statesman about the three new members of the Committee and secondly to express to you, Sir, my admiration and deep fellow feeling.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The spring part of the session of the Committee on Disarmament is coming to an end. The Committee has taken its first steps. It has prepared and adopted its rules of procedure, which will form the basis of its future work. It has prepared an agenda which, besides the tasks for this year, also includes those areas in the matter of restricting the arms race and of disarmament with which the Committee will deal in the future.

Unfortunately we are bound to note that practically for the whole of the present session the Committee was occupied with organizational questions which, important as they are, nevertheless cannot take the place of work on matters of substance.

In accordance with the agenda, as adopted, the Committee has before it important tasks in the sphere of disarmament with which it will have to deal this year. We have had time to deal in the most provisional manner with only two questions -- cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and the question of chemical weapons. Both these issues will evidently occupy an important place in the work of the summer part of the session.

No less important a place in the course of future work should also be occupied by such problems as guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. A draft convention on the prohibition of the production, stock-piling, deployment and use of neutron weapons has been on the Committee's files for a long time. We think it is time progress was made in this matter as well.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

As for the question of cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, the majority of delegations, as the first discussion has shown, recognize the extreme importance and urgency of this issue. We express satisfaction with the constructive and businesslike nature of the discussion which has taken place. Nuclear disarmament must occupy an appropriate place in the programme of work of the summer part of the session as well. We hope that the discussion of this question will lead to concrete results, i.e. to the early start of consultations for the preparation of negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope that, convening in June for the continuation of its session, the Committee will be able successfully to fulfil the tasks before it.

I should also like to express our gratitude to the Secretariat, the interpreters and all those who made a contribution to the work of this part of the session of the Committee on Disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Gentlemen, now that we are nearly at the end of the first part of our session, I would like to say a few words to the distinguished delegates of the Committee and to tell them of my impressions and my feelings at the end of our work. I would have some hesitation in attempting to evaluate the results of the discussions we have had during the last three months. Most of the delegates around this table have such great and long experience in the field of multilateral disarmament that I cannot fail to trust their ability to make a fair appraisal of the few steps that we have made up to now.

Allow me to say first of all that it was a great honour for Belgium to become a member of this Committee. It was the accident of the alphabetical order, rather than my country's or my own merits, which caused Belgium to take the Chair early on. This was an opportunity to show right from the beginning our solidarity with the members of the Committee and our desire to perform a useful service in the cause of disarmament. I wish specially to express my deep gratitude for the effective collaboration that you have all without exception given me as Chairman. I am saying

(The Chairman)

this on my own behalf, but I am sure that my distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Thomson, Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas and Ambassador Boudjakdji entirely share my appreciation and my feelings of gratitude.

Distinguished delegates, the first part of the 1979 session was obviously of a somewhat special nature. It was not possible for our Committee to enter immediately into the substance of the many problems that arise in the disarmament field. First, we had to adopt our rules of conduct, to draft our agenda, and to draw up our programme of work. Those are exercises which, by their very nature, often fail to attract the kind of public attention we would like. And yet, when dealing with subjects as vast, complex and difficult as those of disarmament, it is indispensable to lay down lines of conduct and to fix methods of work. Without a code of conduct and without a method of work, no progress is possible. The fact that we succeeded in establishing rules of procedure and fixing the order of our work is itself auspicious for our Committee's future. In this connexion, I would like to express once again, on behalf of all of you, our most sincere thanks to Ambassador Ortiz de Rozas and to Ambassador Thomson for their respective contributions which can only be described as outstanding and most valuable.

Distinguished delegates, although during this first period we concentrated primarily on matters of procedure and the organization of work, we were nevertheless able to consider the substance of a number of problems of the first importance. Not by chance, no doubt, did you select two topics, nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of chemical weapons. In the short time at our disposal, we were not able to progress as far and in as positive a manner in these two fields as we wished, but to me the progress made gives a clear and important political indication of the role that our Committee should play in the second part of its session and in the years to come.

Distinguished delegates, allow me one last time to thank you most sincerely for the kindness that you showed towards me. I wish also to thank the members of the Secretariat for their effective assistance. Please allow me to add an expression of my personal esteem and appreciation to Mr. Berasategui for his daily, and I might say almost hourly, support and help.

My thanks go also to the interpreters to whom I wish once again to apologize for the sometimes excessive demands that we have made on them.

(The Chairman)

It is with confidence that I turn to the delegation of Brazil which in June will take up the burden, and also the torch. I am confident that its long experience in disarmament matters and the exceptional quality of its diplomats will make their mark on the second part of the session right from the beginning.

I shall, of course, remain at the Committee's disposal in the period between now and the time when the distinguished delegate of Brazil will take the Chair.

I thank you all.

Do any delegations wish to speak?

If not, I wish to announce that the next official meeting of the Committee will take place on 12 June at 10.30 a.m.

With your permission, I declare the meeting closed.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.