SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 7 March 1980, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. VAERNØ (Norway)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE CONVENTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN ITS ARTICLE XII
(agenda item 10) (continued)

(a) GENERAL DEBATE (continued) (BWC/CONF.1/3-6)

1. Mr. de SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil) said it was understandable that States, having first considered separately the various aspects of the complex question of the application of scientific knowledge for military purposes, had ultimately concluded a Convention that dealt largely with bacteriological weapons. The Brazilian Government had always been of the opinion that chemical, bacteriological and toxin weapons should be considered as a single issue, but when it had become apparent that progress would be possible only on the two latter types of weapons, it had actively participated in the efforts which had led to the adoption of the Convention. Acceptance of that approach should not, however, in any way detract from the importance of negotiations on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons.

2. Brazil's stand on the issue had been made known at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, when it had recognized that, because of the differences in the military and peaceful uses of biological agents, on the one hand, and chemical weapons on the other, and because of the very nature of the production process and the problems involved in control and verification, it was unlikely that negotiations would result in the simultaneous prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of both categories of weapons. For that reason, the Brazilian delegation, while supporting the broadest possible prohibition of those weapons, had taken care not to prejudice the nature of the legal instruments that should embody such a prohibition. His delegation therefore hoped that the Committee on Disarmament, which was the proper forum for the negotiation of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, would embark on such negotiations at its current session, while the States parties to the Convention under review should, for their part, abide by the commitment they had entered into under article IX thereof.

3. With regard to the system of verification, when the Convention had been concluded the Brazilian Government had favoured a strictly impartial and factual inquiry mechanism. The Brazilian delegation to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament had therefore suggested that, initially, a subsidiary body of the Security Council, acting informally and immediately, might deal with complaints of violations of the Convention and thus prevent a dispute from deteriorating into a political confrontation. Such a procedure might expedite preliminary investigations, while ensuring that a permanent member of the Security Council could not, by using the veto, debar an investigation into a complaint made against it or one of its allies. That point had been noted by the Swedish representative in the First Committee at the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The formula finally agreed on, however, fell short of the requirements of the Convention and could serve as an undesirable precedent for future disarmament measures, other international legal instruments and even settlement of disputes in general.
4. The Brazilian Government, which also attached importance to the relationship between disarmament and development, had, together with the members of the Group of Twelve of the Conference on Disarmament, submitted a proposal (CCD/341) for the inclusion in the Convention of a provision on that question. It was therefore regrettable that the final text of the Convention had not taken account of that issue, which had since acquired greater relevance.

5. As Brazil was an active member of a group of experts which was carrying out a study of the matter, his delegation felt bound to underline the principle that a substantial portion of the savings deriving from disarmament measures should be devoted to economic and social development, particularly in the developing countries. Advances in biology, bacteriology, toxicology and chemistry were of direct relevance since, as was clear from the background paper submitted in document BWC/CONF.I/5, technology that could be used for hostile purposes was also needed for such important peaceful purposes as medicine, agriculture and industry. The Brazilian Government therefore attached the utmost importance to full compliance with article X of the Convention, the implementation of whose terms would amply demonstrate that the technology used for hostile purposes could also be used to promote international well-being through co-operation, with special regard to the needs of developing countries.

6. In that connexion, the proposal that a mechanism be established for future review of the Convention merited further consideration. For instance, so far as article X was concerned, it might be advisable to think in terms of the next review of the operation of the Convention. It would also be of interest to have a paper, prepared by the Secretariat with the assistance of the parties, on the progress achieved in regard to technological co-operation, particularly with developing countries, with a view to assessing the extent of compliance with article X. If a further review conference was not held within a reasonable period, the paper could be distributed to the parties for information and comment.

7. His Government would make every endeavour to further the objectives of the Convention and thereby achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

8. Mr. ENDENBILEG (Mongolia) noted with satisfaction that a number of important international treaties and agreements aimed at limiting certain aspects of the arms race had been concluded during the past two decades thanks to the persistent efforts of the peace-loving countries, especially the socialist countries. The Bacteriological Weapons Convention represented the first real disarmament measure and the first major step towards the achievement of agreement on the effective prohibition of other forms of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. As such, the Convention was an instrument of immense importance. The fact that almost 90 States had ratified the Convention bore eloquent witness to the recognition it had received, and the representatives of the States parties gathered at the Review Conference had every reason to regard it as a reliable instrument capable of continuing to serve the noble aims of disarmament.
9. He joined previous speakers in welcoming the fact that the Convention's basic provisions had been faithfully observed by all States parties in the five years since the Convention's entry into force. It was important that all participants in the Conference should collectively reaffirm the purposes and objectives of the Convention and their firm resolve to continue to abide by their obligations under it.

10. Another important action which the Conference should take was to issue an urgent appeal to all States which had not yet done so, particularly nuclear-weapon Powers, to adhere to the Convention without delay. Such an appeal was already contained in paragraph 73 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. No instrument of international law, especially in the vitally important sphere of disarmament, could be fully effective without the participation of all States, particularly those with a major military and industrial potential. The absence of a number of States, including nuclear-weapon States which were permanent members of the Security Council, from the parties to the Convention could not be ignored.

11. The matter was particularly important for Mongolia, which had a common frontier with a country which persistently ignored international treaties and agreements in the disarmament field and, in particular, the Biological Weapons Convention, although that Convention was a logical continuation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, the only treaty relating to disarmament to which China was a party. In that connexion, Mongolia could not but bear in mind the hostile acts committed by that country's leaders. Those acts represented a real threat to Mongolia's sovereignty and independence, and a gross violation of elementary standards of international conduct, in particular standards set in the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

12. On the subject of the prohibition of chemical weapons, he noted with regret that efforts to achieve agreement on the removal of such weapons from the arsenals of States, made for many years in the Committee on Disarmament and other forums, had so far failed owing to the lack of the necessary political will on the part of certain Western States. Nevertheless, Mongolia, as a member of the Committee on Disarmament, took an optimistic view of the future and placed great hopes in the current USSR-United States negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons and also in multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the Committee on Disarmament. The present aggravation of the international atmosphere made more essential than ever the search for further effective means of limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament.

13. Mr. ADENILI (Nigeria) said that his country regarded the Convention, to which it was a party, as a very positive disarmament measure in that it provided for the prohibition of one of the most repulsive weapons in the arsenals of States. Moreover, the Convention furthered the contribution which the 1925 Geneva Protocol had made to man's endeavours to control the means of warfare. He was therefore pleased to report that Nigeria had complied fully with its obligations under the Convention. As Nigeria did not possess biological weapons, as defined in article I, it followed that it had no such weapons to destroy, as required by article II, or, indeed, to transfer.

14. The operation of the Convention had, on the whole, been satisfactory. A measure of its effectiveness was the fact that there had been no reported use of biological warfare agents and that recourse to article V had therefore not been necessary. That did not, however, mean that there was no need for the
Conference to examine ways of strengthening the Convention by closing certain loopholes and removing ambiguities. His delegation would welcome, for example, the introduction of some system under which the destruction of stockpiles or their diversion to peaceful purposes could be verified.

15. The complaints procedure, as provided for under article VI, was not entirely satisfactory since under its terms only the Security Council could initiate an investigation. In view of the obvious political and practical difficulties that would cause, his delegation agreed that some way should be found of separating the fact-finding stage of the complaints procedure from the Security Council’s political consideration of, and decision on, the matter.

16. With regard to article X, his delegation had taken note of the efforts being made by the developed countries as outlined in document EWC/CONF.1/4. It would, however, urge the need for greater efforts in view of the developing countries’ pressing health problems, particularly in regard to debilitating diseases such as malaria and cholera. That would also open up an avenue for the transfer of resources from military to civilian needs.

17. On the subject of a prohibition on chemical weapons, he said that the failure of the Committee on Disarmament to negotiate a convention was due not to any lack of effort on its part but, in his delegation’s view, to a lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States. Paragraphs 21 and 25 of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament were unequivocal in their reference to the urgent need to reach agreement on a chemical weapons ban, as were a number of General Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 34/72. Although the Conference should urge the United States and the Soviet Union to bring their bilateral negotiations to an early conclusion, the Committee on Disarmament should not allow the conduct of its own negotiations to be delayed on that account. It would be useful if the partners in the bilateral negotiations could submit a report on the status of those negotiations as soon as possible. His delegation hoped that the Committee on Disarmament would respond positively to the proposals made by the Group of 21 in two working papers (CD/11 and CD/64) concerning the need to establish a working group to deal with the question of a chemical weapons ban. That was an urgent task, for the signs were ominous and any delay in negotiations could result in feverish efforts to develop or test those inhumane weapons.

18. Mr. DUMEBI (Ghana) said that, at the start of the Second Disarmament Decade, when the disarmament process assumed even greater urgency, new energy must be generated in the search for measures to free mankind from the serious threat posed by the arms race. The Conference was particularly significant in that it was dealing with a category of weapons that was regarded with universal horror. It was therefore imperative that it take a critical look at the Convention and make constructive proposals for improving its operation with a view to ending the threat to mankind which was inherent in the proliferation and use of such weapons.
19. Ghana had abided strictly by its obligations under the Convention and, as a developing country, had no intention of developing bacteriological weapons. Its main concern was to secure a comprehensive and verifiable prohibition that was consistent with the goal of disarmament. In that connexion, while it had noted the satisfaction expressed concerning the operation of the Convention, it considered that certain provisions should be strengthened. For example, with regard to control and verification, article II seemed to provide solely for national verification whereas a combination of international and national methods would promote mutual confidence.

20. His delegation also felt that the Convention should have imposed on States an obligation to declare possession of biological weapons and production facilities, to invite experts from other countries to observe the destruction of plants, and to exchange information on protection activities. Those requirements, which had been successfully tried and tested elsewhere, were not incompatible with industrial secrecy. As verification was so vital for the implementation of the Convention, his delegation would welcome further consideration of those points by the Conference.

21. His delegation was not altogether satisfied with the complaints procedure as laid down in article VI. The designation of the Security Council as the only body competent to receive complaints could mean that the veto might be exercised to nullify the procedure in the case of a complaint against a permanent member of the Security Council or one of its close allies. An international complaints committee, operating within the framework of the United Nations, would therefore be preferable.

22. His delegation considered that the Conference should recommend the early conclusion of an agreement to prohibit the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. The close connexion between the efforts to ban those weapons and the ban on bacteriological weapons was recognized in the eighth preambular paragraph of the Convention. The extensive discussions that had taken place on the question for over a decade, together with the numerous resolutions passed on it, had highlighted the crucial nature of the technical problems involved, while clarifying the views of States. They had also resulted in a number of documents which could provide a useful basis on which at least to commence negotiations.

23. In the final analysis, the attainment of the Convention's basic objective depended not on its formulation but on the political will of States parties, which derived in turn from the climate of international relations. In that connexion, he wondered whether the Conference could really claim that the stated objective of strengthening confidence between States and improving the international atmosphere in general had been attained. The serious setback which disarmament had recently suffered was a cause of deep disquiet to his delegation: in recent months, certain major military Powers had engaged in a dangerous escalation of their nuclear arsenals, and even the modest ceilings agreed upon at the SALT II talks seemed to be in jeopardy. Possibly the most disturbing fact of all, to a founding member of the non-aligned movement, was that the two key elements of the disarmament process, détente and non-alignment, had perhaps been seriously undermined. His delegation would therefore urge the Conference to appeal for restraint and strict adherence to the principles and purposes of the Charter.
24. Mr. VRHUNEĆ (Yugoslavia) stressed the importance of the Biological Weapons Convention which, for the first time in the history of negotiations on disarmament, represented a genuine disarmament measure. It was the duty of the Conference to review the implementation of the Convention's provisions and to see to what extent the States parties had lived up to their commitments. The Conference also offered an opportunity to establish whether and how the implementation of the Convention had had a positive effect on the arms race or whether, conversely, the prevailing negative situation in the disarmament field was hindering the full implementation of the Convention's provisions.

25. The present unparalleled accumulation of weapons throughout the world created a pressing need to establish equitable and lasting security for all countries without distinction. Like other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia had always stressed that relaxation of tension could be achieved only through the active participation of all members of the international community in the establishment of a new international political and economic order based on equity and non-interference, a predominant feature of which would be the effective reduction of armed forces and weapons. If the resources used for armaments were channelled towards development, the world would rapidly enter a new era of prosperity. Peace, security and development could not be promoted parallel with the arms race. The Convention offered an opportunity to all its signatories, through co-operation on an equal basis, to utilize the relevant scientific developments for peaceful purposes.

26. Although the Convention did not provide for verification measures, it contributed to progress in the disarmament field in general by creating a greater degree of confidence. The very existence of the possibility that biological agents might be used for inadmissible purposes made each party responsible for preventing their misuse by individuals, groups or organizations in a way that could cause damage to any country. There was also an obligation and a need for all signatories of the Convention to co-operate very closely in preventing such misuse, since without effective co-operation and suitable measures to prevent misuse adequate implementation of the Convention was impossible. Each State party was particularly responsible for the activities of persons or organizations which might acquire biological agents or their products within its territory for the purpose of inflicting harm on other States. It was a well-known fact that research in molecular biology, particularly in so-called "genetic engineering", could involve accidental and unpredictable risks affecting not only the institution and the country in which the research was taking place but other countries as well. In such a situation, immediate and urgent intervention would be necessary, implying a commitment not only for the State party in which the incident had occurred, but also for any State directly threatened or one that had identified the existence of a risk, to inform other States parties and the United Nations without delay of the type and likely duration of the risk and to make proposals for its control and elimination. His delegation attached special importance to such co-operation, which it regarded as the only appropriate way of ensuring the full implementation of the Convention's provisions.

27. Since the Convention's entry into force, considerable efforts had been made to promote co-operation in accordance with article X and certain results had been achieved. Unfortunately, however, the situation with regard to
international co-operation in the use of available knowledge and expertise was as yet far from satisfactory. There was an urgent need for more tangible and direct co-operation and assistance in the application of scientific achievements and the transfer and exchange of information, equipment, material and technological know-how to developing countries. Such co-operation between the developed and the developing countries should be of a long-term nature and should proceed on a footing of equality without monopolistic or protectionist restrictions by the developed countries. The most immediate form of such co-operation was the training of personnel from developing countries and their active engagement in the execution of national programmes agreed on with United Nations agencies and implemented under their supervision and guidance. Projects devised for that purpose were already in existence, but they by no means satisfied the developing countries' needs.

26. Turning to the question of chemical weapons, he noted with regret that the provisions of article IX of the Convention had not been implemented in the five years since the Convention's entry into force; indeed, some military Powers continued to avoid negotiations on chemical weapons within the Committee on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament problems. Attempts to set up an ad hoc working group within the Committee on Disarmament to draft an international agreement on chemical weapons had failed for lack of a necessary consensus. In a statement at the end of the 1979 session of the Committee on Disarmament, the Group of 21 non-aligned and neutral countries had reiterated its call for the establishment of such a group at the beginning of the 1980 session (document CD/50). The Yugoslav delegation wholeheartedly identified itself with that appeal.

29. Mr. GREKOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) remarked that the general debate had so far confirmed the Convention's importance and effectiveness. By averting the possibility of use of bacteriological weapons, the Convention served the cause of improving the international situation and strengthening international peace and security. Its conclusion had represented a step towards a similar agreement on chemical weapons and had given a fresh impulse to negotiations on the limitation of the arms race and disarmament in general, an area in which further decisive progress was urgently called for.

30. He was happy to note, with previous speakers, that in the five years since the Convention's entry into force none of the States parties had had occasion to resort to the complaints procedure provided for in article VI. The States parties were implementing the Convention's provisions in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. It was also evident that scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention were not creating new capabilities or incentives for the clandestine violation or circumvention of the Convention.

31. Referring to critical comments made by some previous speakers, more particularly concerning article II of the Convention which, allegedly, failed to establish an obligation for States parties to report on their destruction of biological agents, toxins, weapons, equipment or means of delivery he observed that such a provision would be unnecessary in view of the obligations expressly assumed by States parties to the Convention under article II. As for the
procedure for lodging complaints in the event of a breach of the Convention, it should be borne in mind that the effectiveness of the Convention largely depended not on the use of the right of veto by permanent members of the Security Council, but on the willingness of all major military Powers and, in particular, two permanent members of the Security Council to become parties to the Convention.

32. Generally speaking, he saw no reason for calling the complaints procedure into question. It was to be supposed that all States parties would continue to discharge their obligations under the Convention in a spirit of goodwill. There were no grounds for doubting their readiness to abide by obligations freely assumed. The question of appealing to permanent members of the Security Council who were States parties to the Convention to renounce their right of veto in connexion with technical problems relating to the Convention touched upon the provisions of the United Nations Charter and could not be discussed at conferences for the review of the operation of conventions. In the present case, raising that question was particularly irregular since not all the permanent members of the Security Council were parties to the Convention.

33. After referring to the communication from the Byelorussian SSR on its compliance with the provisions of the Convention (document E/CN.4/CONF.1/4, p. 18), he reviewed in detail his country's participation in international co-operation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities. The results of peaceful scientific activity were widely published by the States parties to the Convention, and his delegation saw no reason for organizing other forms of scientific information on questions relevant to the Convention.

34. On the subject of chemical weapons, he reiterated his delegation's wholehearted support of article IX of the Convention. The Byelorussian SSR had been a co-author of the draft convention on that subject submitted by the socialist countries to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in 1972. It welcomed the bilateral and multilateral negotiations currently taking place and was confident of their early successful completion.

35. In conclusion, he expressed the view that the final document of the Conference should be in the nature of a declaration reflecting the positive aspects of the Convention's operation and calling upon all States which had not yet done so to adhere to the Convention. The convening of future review conferences could be left to the decision of a majority of the States parties.

36. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that the Convention under review had been the first practical disarmament measure adopted by the international community, and endeavours should be made to ensure that it was not the only one. The current international situation was hardly propitious for progress towards the goals of disarmament set out in the final document adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session. International tensions had escalated, the principles of the United Nations had been flouted and there was a possibility of an escalation of the nuclear and conventional arms race between the major Powers. His delegation hoped that that trend could be reversed. The Conference,
which represented States that had legally adhered to the first international disarmament measure, must underline their continuing commitment to the reversal of the arms race and to the elimination of the threat posed to international peace and security by the growing danger of a nuclear conflict.

37. His delegation proposed that the Conference should objectively assess, first, the implementation of all the obligations undertaken under the Convention, and secondly, measures to ensure fuller adherence to those obligations both in letter and spirit, and steps to enhance the prospects of a chemical weapons ban and other disarmament measures.

38. Pakistan, like many other States during the negotiations in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), had favoured a comprehensive approach to the prohibition of both biological and chemical weapons. It had been deeply disappointed when it had not been found possible to include chemical weapons in the convention prepared in the CCD. Pakistan had been able to support and adhere to the Convention under review in large measure because, under the preamble and article IX, it clearly embodied a solemn undertaking by the parties to achieve a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons as soon as possible.

39. It was a matter of concern that the negotiations regarding chemical weapons had so far remained stagnant. That question had been removed from the purview of the multilateral negotiating body and had languished in more restricted talks between two major Powers. That state of affairs constituted a derogation of the obligations undertaken under the Convention. The General Assembly had called, repeatedly and most recently in resolution 34/72, for the conclusion of an agreement on prohibition of the development, manufacture and destruction of chemical weapons as a matter of the highest priority. The technical basis for the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention was present; what was now required was the political will on the part of the major Powers to give up the option of using that terrible means of mass destruction. The Conference must underline the importance of the conclusion of a Convention prohibiting chemical weapons for the continuing relevance and viability of the Biological Weapons Convention.

40. His delegation also attached considerable significance to article X of the Convention, which provided for greater co-operation among State parties in the peaceful uses of bacteriological agents and toxins. The application and uses of those agents for various peaceful purposes had increased significantly, especially in the field of medicine. However, international co-operation in that area had remained restricted and ad hoc in nature, and was not consonant with the letter and spirit of article X of the Convention. The Conference should recommend the convening of a meeting under the auspices of the United Nations to promote the objectives of greater participation, especially by developing countries, in the economic and medical uses of bacteriological agents and toxins.

41. His delegation also supported the suggestion made by the Romanian representative for the establishment of institutional means to ensure a greater and more regular flow of information about technological developments which could affect the implementation of the Convention.
42. It would be recalled that at the time of adoption of the Convention doubts had been expressed regarding the complaints and compliance procedures provided for therein. Those procedures had not been tested in practice, but their importance was not restricted to the context of the Convention. It must be ascertained whether they conformed to the standard for verification and control which would be necessary for the implementation of other arms control and disarmament measures expected to be concluded in the near future, in particular a chemical weapons convention and a treaty banning nuclear weapon tests. His Government believed that any-control procedure which was dependent entirely on action through the Security Council, with all its limitations, was not entirely suitable as a means of ensuring the implementation of obligations undertaken by sovereign States as equal parties. The fact that some permanent members of the Security Council had the greatest potential for possible derogation from the provisions of the Convention and other disarmament agreements further increased doubts about the viability of the procedure. His delegation suggested that an appropriate procedure should be found for beginning examination of a verification system for the Convention which accorded equal opportunity for participation by all States parties and aroused real confidence in the fuller application of the Convention.

43. He hoped that the Conference would adopt recommendations for specific action on the points he had outlined. That would give credibility to the commitments by all States parties to the Convention. His delegation also considered that the Conference should recommend a mechanism for the more frequent and periodic review of the application of the Convention, in view of the currently more rapid pace of both political and technological developments. Perhaps the United Nations Centre for Disarmament could be entrusted with the responsibility of disseminating information on technological developments and other developments which impinged on the implementation of the Convention.

44. His delegation hoped that the results of the Conference would enhance not only the adherence by States to the Convention but also the prospects for other disarmament measures, especially a chemical weapons convention.

45. Mr. CIARRA'CO (Italy) reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to the cause of disarmament and expressed the opinion that the Conference represented an important and significant moment in the process of disarmament. He reserved the right to comment on the specific provisions of the Convention at a later stage.

46. He noted with great satisfaction that since the Convention's entry into force no complaints had been lodged. That could be seen as the best indication of the effectiveness of the Convention.

47. He welcomed the reports on article II, which provided for the destruction or diversion to peaceful purposes of all agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery specified in article I, and hoped that other similar reports would follow. It was, moreover, important to stress that the Convention had not hindered activities
for peaceful purposes. His delegation expressed appreciation to the depositary Governments for the report (document E/CN.4/CONF.1/5) they had produced on new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention. He had taken note with interest and satisfaction of the document's conclusion that the Convention covered all recent scientific and technological developments.

48. His delegation therefore shared the opinion, already largely voiced by other speakers, that the Convention had fulfilled its essential purposes. If that opinion was generally confirmed at the end of the Conference in a more complete and detailed way, it should encourage other countries to accede to the Convention. Although there were now 87 States parties to the Convention, it was desirable that other States should accede with a view to ensuring universal adherence.

49. While his delegation would consider with interest any constructive proposals which might be put forward, it considered that the present text of the Convention had proved its substantial effectiveness and that there were scarcely grounds for attempting to change or amend its provisions. Nevertheless, steps should be taken to find appropriate ways of enhancing consultation and co-operation among States parties so as to ensure, in the framework of the present provisions, the full and complete implementation of the Convention.

50. Despite his delegation's generally positive attitude towards the Convention, it felt a certain disappointment with regard to the provisions on chemical weapons, in particular article IX. It had always attached particular interest to the question of chemical weapons and his Government had made serious efforts to attempt to bring about an agreement on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of such weapons and on their destruction.

51. While his delegation was well aware of the delicacy of the subject, it nevertheless considered that a solution of the problem was overdue. Many substantive and procedural proposals, including three draft conventions, had been submitted in the Committee on Disarmament, which should promptly begin effective negotiations leading to the conclusion of a multilateral agreement acceptable to all States.

52. To that end, his delegation had taken the initiative of suggesting to the Committee on Disarmament the establishment of a special working group which should identify topics to be covered by the future convention. The extensive support given to that proposal aroused hopes of further progress on that crucial issue.

53. He assured the Conference of his delegation's desire to co-operate in the most constructive way in order to ensure its positive outcome.

The meeting was suspended at 5.10 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.
ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE AND CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (agenda item 6) (continued)

54. The PRESIDENT reported that after consultations, Mr. de Souza e Silva (Brazil) had been nominated for the office of Chairman of the Credentials Committee and Mr. Kochubey (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) for the office of Vice-Chairman.

55. Mr. de Souza e Silva (Brazil) and Mr. Kochubey (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Credentials Committee by acclamation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

56. The PRESIDENT said that there appeared to be wide agreement that the work of the Conference would be facilitated by the establishment of a Committee of the Whole to consider in greater detail the substantive issues relevant to the Convention. He therefore proposed that, in accordance with rule 34 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Conference should establish a Committee of the Whole open to each State party participating in the Conference to consider the substantive issues concerned and report to the plenary not later than 17 March.

57. It was so decided.

58. The PRESIDENT further stated that there appeared to be general agreement that Mr. Voutov (Bulgaria) should serve as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

59. Mr. Voutov (Bulgaria) was elected Chairman of the Committee of the Whole by acclamation.

60. Mr. FLOWERPOT (United States of America) expressed satisfaction with the decision to establish a Committee of the Whole in order to assist the Conference in its work by considering the substantive issues in detail. However, while he was glad to accept that step as a means of speeding up the Conference's work, he pointed out that the tasks in question were not those normally undertaken by a Committee of the Whole. The procedure should not therefore be regarded as constituting a precedent.

61. Mr. PERPILEY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the fact that the Conference had been able to set up a Committee of the Whole, which, he hoped, would enable the Conference to accomplish its task successfully. He was sure that the Chairman's extensive experience would enable the Committee to conclude its work and to reach an agreement which could be translated into a final document that would receive the Conference's approval.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.