SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 15 September 1986, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. LANG (Austria)

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GE.86-64245/45515
The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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

(a) GENERAL DEBATE (concluded)

1. Mr. FRANCESCHI (Italy) said that the United Kingdom representative had already expressed the common views of the 12 member States of the European Economic Community, including Italy. His country considered the adoption of the Convention one of the most significant achievements in the field of disarmament, together with the adoption of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1969. His Government noted the intensity of the present international dialogue on disarmament issues, which created a favourable context and was fully determined to make a positive contribution to the success of the Second Review Conference as well as to the strengthening of the Convention.

2. Italy had fully abided by the provisions of the Convention. It possessed no bacteriological or toxin weapons and had not assisted any other State to acquire them. His Government believed that in the present circumstances declarations alone were not enough to guarantee that the Convention was fully respected. It was true, as the United Kingdom representative had acknowledged, that a review conference could not amend the Convention or establish new obligations. The problem of assurance of compliance, however, did concern the Conference. The problem was the more relevant because the Convention did not at present provide for verification mechanisms capable of eliminating the doubts which had arisen regarding effective compliance with its provisions. The Conference should therefore encourage greater transparency regarding all activities relevant to the Convention, as well as a more general acceptance of updated and effective verification mechanisms. The need for adequate guarantees regarding compliance with the Convention and for devising verification mechanisms agreed upon in a spirit of mutual understanding was increased by recent scientific advances in the field of biology which might enlarge the risk of violations. Every possible effort should be made to increase the effectiveness of the ban on biological weapons and enhance the credibility of the Convention.

3. A number of concrete confidence-building measures might be considered, among them procedures for the notification of outbreaks of disease or of accidents in laboratories or production plants, the exchange of information on research in the field of biotechnology and on facilities requiring special safety measures, wider participation in the investigation of outbreaks of disease and international exchanges of scientists and experts engaged in biotechnology, including visits to research laboratories. His Government's "open laboratories" proposal was particularly relevant to the field of application of the Convention.

4. He hoped those suggestions would be reflected in the final document of the Conference. He hoped also that other participants would be as willing as Italy to accept the immediate adoption of confidence-building measures and effective verification mechanisms. If that were done, new impetus would be given to the disarmament process and in particular the early conclusion of an international convention banning chemical weapons.
5. Mr. MORELLI PANDO (Peru) said that Peru, which had ratified the Convention on 5 June 1983, earnestly hoped that a convention providing for the complete prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing chemical weapons would be speedily adopted.

6. For a number of years, the 1972 Convention had been weakened by various ambiguities and its application had been jeopardized by the development of biological agents and toxins capable of being used for military purposes. It was of the utmost importance therefore to avoid any weakening of mutual confidence among the parties at the Conference. Confidence should, on the contrary, be strengthened, which could be done by adopting appropriate arrangements, without necessarily modifying article V. Under such arrangements the scientifically advanced countries would declare the number and location of facilities engaged in research on microbiol agents, other biological agents and toxins for prophylactic and peaceful purposes and would accept visits by scientists from other States Parties. In that context, it might be possible to revive the idea of setting up a permanent consultative committee of States Parties with a membership of qualified experts to dissuade States from secretly possessing or using biological weapons.

7. In the light of reports concerning the use of chemical weapons in warfare, it was evident that the implementation of article VIII demanded major commitment on the part of the Contracting Parties with a view to strict compliance with the 1925 Protocol. Article IX called for the adoption of a convention on chemical weapons and his delegation hoped that that would be achieved in 1987. Pursuant to article X, early steps should be taken to encourage a broad exchange of information and materials among the States Parties for the peaceful use of biological agents and toxins. In his view, the developing countries should enjoy preferential treatment in such broad exchanges between the parties. In addition, biological disarmament by the more developed countries would release resources the final use of which must be compatible with the interests of an international community endowed with a greater sense of fairness and solidarity.

8. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that, as was indicated in the Australian reply to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, his country was in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention. That instrument was unique among modern disarmament agreements in that, together with the 1925 Protocol, it established an important norm of international behaviour, namely that States should not possess or use biological agents or toxins as weapons. Those important principles were reflected in the preamble to the Convention.

9. Eleven years after its adoption, the Convention was in basically good shape. There were at present 103 States Parties, and none had withdrawn. Since the First Review Conference, however, the Convention had been placed at risk by new developments in biotechnology and allegations of non-compliance. The verification provisions had been increasingly recognized as inadequate by present-day standards and advances in biology had made biological weapons a more attractive option to military planners.

10. There had been considerable debate about the military implications of genetic engineering. In particular, it had been postulated that genetic engineering techniques might make it possible to produce highly virulent bacteria resistant to antibiotics but against which the aggressor's forces could be protected by vaccines. It had even been suggested that it might be
possible to engineer bacteria that were preferentially effective against certain ethnic groups. Activities of that kind were not proscribed by the Convention, although the stockpiling of large quantities of biological agents was prohibited. But if appropriate facilities existed, it might be possible to produce tonne amounts from seed material within weeks. The risks were greater in that there was an overlap, or at least a grey area, between "defensive" and "offensive" research. Thus, research for peaceful or prophylactic purposes could produce information that could be used to develop biological warfare agents with novel immunological or pathogenic characteristics.

11. Two events had occurred since the entry into force of the Convention that had focused attention on its effectiveness. The first was the outbreak of anthrax among people living near Sverdlovsk, in the USSR, in 1979. Allegations had been made that the outbreak had been caused by a release of bacteria from a biological weapons research and production facility at Sverdlovsk and that the quantities involved demonstrated a clear breach of the Convention. Those charges had been denied by the Soviet Union but appropriate steps that would have enabled the facts of the situation to be established had not been taken. The second event involved allegations that toxin weapons had been used against civilians and resistance fighters in Laos and Cambodia. Those charges had also been denied but a team of experts sent by the United Nations in 1981 and 1982 had not been allowed into the area where the alleged breaches had taken place. Australia had discussed these allegations in an informal manner with a number of States Parties.

12. In order to dispel doubts and enhance confidence, States should be prepared to assume an obligation to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Convention when challenged. In a general way, States Parties should show greater openness with regard to their activities of relevance to the Convention. With these considerations in mind, Australia would support any call for a strengthening of the verification mechanisms and would favour the convening of a special conference, if necessary, to strengthen the Convention itself.

13. Australia already provided a great deal of information on epidemics in its territory. It reported annually on a wide range of diseases to FAO and to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). As a member of OIE, Australia was required to notify the agency of suspicion or confirmation of outbreaks of the most serious diseases by telegram or telex within 24 hours. In addition, it reported annually to WHO on the national status of 46 communicable diseases ranging from anthrax to yellow fever. The Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee administered by the Australian Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce had produced guidelines on DNA recombinant research and the environmental release of recombinant DNA products. Australia's experience showed that a great deal of information on communicable diseases, animal and human, could be made public on a routine basis without jeopardizing any national security interests.

14. His delegation urged all States Parties to make full use of the international reporting and control mechanisms existing under, for instance, FAO and WHO. It also favoured greater information exchanges among Parties as to the nature, purpose and extent of biological research programmes, the reporting of unusual or prolonged outbreaks of diseases, the declaration of
high containment facilities engaged in biological research; greater exchanges
of scientists; facilitation of the publication and the dissemination of
research into biotechnology; timely investigation of alleged violations of
the Convention. Until more permanent measures were agreed, verification of
alleged uses of biological weapons could be made on the basis of
General Assembly resolutions 37/98 D and 39/55 E.

15. The Conference should consider further the means by which data exchanges
could be facilitated. A number of possibilities existed. Existing
United Nations machinery such as the Office of the United Nations
Secretary-General, the Department for Disarmament Affairs or the
United Nations Office at Geneva might be used. Another possibility might be
to involve one or more of the Depositary Powers which would undertake the task
using its own resources. Alternatively a small secretariat might be
established under United Nations auspices. His Government would prefer to see
data exchanges take place under United Nations auspices.

16. His delegation would give serious consideration to the suggestions of
other delegations for strengthening the Convention. His Government attached
high priority to the rapid conclusion of a convention banning chemical
weapons. The Conference on Disarmament's Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons
had achieved considerable progress in 1986 and it was important that the
momentum should be sustained. It was important also that the close
interrelationship between the two conventions should be recognized. His
delegation would do everything possible to ensure that the Conference
strengthened the Convention and upheld its authority.

17. Mr. CLERCX (Belgium), after associating himself with the statement made
by the United Kingdom representative on behalf of the European Community, said
it was regrettable that the confidence originally placed in the Convention had
been to some extent eroded. When the Convention had been adopted, the state
of international relations had been such as to inspire a strong presumption of
compliance and biological weapons had been considered to have little or no
military value. Unfortunately, the original presumption of good faith had
been weakened by allegations which had not been conclusively disproved. Steps
should be taken to ensure that effective measures were taken in such
situations to avoid persistent uncertainty regarding compliance with
fundamental commitments. In addition, there were grounds for believing that
the use of biological weapons had become less unlikely than it had been
14 years earlier as a result of the development of applications of biology.

18. In that context, the Conference should strengthen confidence in the
Convention by appropriate decisions taking into account the changed
situation. Belgium for its part was ready on a basis of reciprocity to adopt
any measure calculated to promote confidence. It welcomed the growing
consensus which was emerging in favour of international on-site verification
and hoped that concrete and dependable agreements would soon be reached. His
delegation also hoped that the negotiations on banning chemical weapons taking
place at Geneva in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament would lead
in the near future to a new international instrument embodying an effective
verification system.

19. It should perhaps be emphasized that the Convention was not a
non-proliferation agreement. All States Parties were required to renounce
bacteriological weapons. The prohibition of the development, production
and stockpiling of bacteriological weapons was a logical extension of the
1925 Protocol and the process begun by the Protocol should be completed by
organizing the concerted, reciprocal and effective renunciation of the
development and possession of biological weapons on a basis of universality.
The negotiations on the banning of chemical weapons were directed towards a
similar goal.

20. Belgium had associated itself with the universal condemnation of the
recent violations of the 1925 Protocol in the Iraq-Iran conflict. At an
earlier stage it had been concerned by previous allegations of violations and
at the second special session of the General Assembly had accordingly made a
proposal to ensure control of the ban on the use of chemical and
bacteriological weapons. Belgium had also been a co-sponsor of
General Assembly resolution 37/98 D. Belgium had never possessed
bacteriological weapons and had fully observed its obligations under the
Convention. It had, moreover, participated actively in international
exchanges to promote the peaceful applications of biology and hoped that that
type of co-operation would be strengthened in accordance with the provisions
of article X. He trusted that the substantive issues would be examined in a
constructive spirit and that the Conference would reach a consensus on a
significant final document that would enhance the prestige of the Convention.

21. Mr. JESSEL (France) observed that the risks of erosion to which the
Convention had been exposed over the years were matters of serious concern.
They were of two kinds, technical and political. So far as the former were
concerned, some key ideas of the Convention were now manifestly obsolete. For
instance, the notion that a country would have to stockpile large quantities
of prohibited agents in order to acquire an offensive capability no longer
squared with the facts. In the present state of the act, a country in that
position could be expected to defer large-scale production as long as possible
and most of the research carried out for an illegitimate purpose would involve
only very small quantities of agents. In addition, the appearance of new
techniques had tended to blur the distinction between legitimate and
illegitimate activities, since the difference between the two was not one of
nature but of purpose.

22. The major cause of the erosion of confidence was, however, political
behaviour at variance with the spirit of the Convention rather than technical
factors. France could not ignore allegations of the use of prohibited weapons
in South East Asia, or for that matter in Afghanistan, any more than it could
ignore certain ambiguous aspects of the outbreak of anthrax reported in 1979
at Sverdlovsk. In all those cases, the parties concerned did not seem to have
done everything in their power to demonstrate their good faith. However
regrettable that attitude might be, it had to be recognized that the
Convention laid down no procedure which would help to resolve the problem in
such situations.

23. The effectiveness of the Convention should be strengthened, particularly
with regard to verification machinery. Since, however, a review conference
did not have the power to amend the Convention, more limited and pragmatic
solutions must be sought. His Government had noted with interest the
suggestions made by various countries and welcomed the fact that the idea of
establishing control mechanisms had not been opposed. For its part, it
proposed the reporting of high containment facilities (civil or military)
of the P3 and P4 types under WHO standards, with the indication of their location and a short description of their activities; the immediate reporting of all unusual events such as outbreaks of disease, mass poisoning or accidents occurring in facilities and involving many casualties; and the reporting of vaccination campaigns. Countries might perhaps be invited to supply proof that the staff of high containment facilities and military personnel were not vaccinated against presumed biological warfare agents. Consideration might be given to the introduction of international fact-finding procedures based on General Assembly resolutions 37/98 D and 39/35 E concerning the 1925 Geneva Protocol. By proposing those measures, France hoped to contribute to the success of the Conference.

24. Mr. NICOLAIDES (Cyprus) said that the Convention remained the only real international arms control agreement. It required the total elimination of such weapons of mass destruction as biological and toxin agents and constituted a prelude to the banning of chemical weapons. It was part of a series of agreements which would hopefully lead to the final objective of general and complete disarmament. It was for that reason of high value.

25. The Second Review Conference acquired added importance from the fact that biological research activities, in particular recent progress in genetic engineering, provided totally new possibilities not only for the welfare of man but also for his potential mass annihilation. At the same time, the increased interest of the military in biological and toxin agents coupled with allegations of violations of the Convention, were a matter of great concern. In that connection, he paid tribute to all the non-governmental organizations whose activities had created a widespread awareness of the dangers inherent in the situation.

26. In the circumstances, it was important that the Conference should make a substantive contribution in strengthening the régime established by the Convention. In particular, it should endorse the viability and importance of the Convention and urge all States that had not yet acceded to it to do so without delay. It was also necessary to enhance confidence among States Parties and to strengthen their ties of co-operation.

27. There was no doubt that increased transparency as far as peaceful research activities in the field of biology were concerned would contribute substantially to enhanced confidence among States. Even more important than openness in that respect, however, was the existence of effective machinery to verify compliance with obligations undertaken under the Convention. Verification procedures were a key element in the implementation of any agreement, particularly in the field of disarmament. The complaints procedure provided for in article VI of the Convention did not seem to be an entirely satisfactory solution. Not only did it fail short of the needs, but verification procedures dependent on action through the United Nations Security Council did not seem suitable to ensuring implementation of obligations undertaken by sovereign States as equal parties. Steps should be taken to remedy the situation, the more so as the international community appeared to be willing to accept more concrete and practical forms of verification, including on-site inspection.

28. Increasing distrust among States Parties to the Convention could not but detract from the expansion of the international co-operation activities provided for in article X of the Convention. Under article X States were not
merely encouraged to exchange equipment, materials and scientific and technological information related to the use of bacteriological agents for peaceful purposes, but they had a duty to do so. It was important that there should be more tangible co-operation in the interests of mankind.

29. Turning to article IX relating to the negotiation of an agreement on the complete banning of chemical weapons, he welcomed the real progress made in that direction in the present year within the Conference on Disarmament and expressed the hope that the negotiations for the conclusion of a Convention would be intensified in the months to come.

30. His delegation believed that the system of review conferences served a very useful purpose. The conferences provided an opportunity for thorough discussion of the operation of the agreements, for focusing on possible loopholes, for exchanging views and information and for ensuring that the agreements continued to be relevant to present-day realities. The unceasing progress of science and technology, as well as international political developments, ample warranted the periodic convening of review conferences.

31. Mr. CHIRILĂ (Romania) said that the Second Review Conference was being held at a time when the international situation was particularly tense and the arms race reaching unprecedented heights that threatened the very survival of humanity. Only genuine disarmament measures could improve the situation. He stressed the importance his country attached to the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological or any other kind.

32. It was with a view to complete and general disarmament that Romania wished to approach the question of the implementation and effectiveness of the Convention. The Convention was a unique instrument, in the sense that it was the first multilateral agreement aimed at the complete elimination of a whole category of weapons and that it was, according to its own definition, a first stage towards the realization of an agreement banning chemical weapons. In accordance to it the States Parties had actually assumed a legal obligation to continue negotiations in good faith with a view to reaching such an agreement. Nevertheless, although the Convention's entry into force in 1975 had had positive effects in respect of détente and confidence among States, it had not so far been followed by other disarmament measures.

33. However, the most recent session of the Conference on Disarmament offered some hope in that connection. After seven years of labour, a consensus appeared to have emerged on the vital necessity of concluding a multilateral convention aimed at prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and at their destruction. The documents of the Conference on Disarmament that had been transmitted to the Second Review Conference gave some idea of the efforts that had been made to that end and bore witness to the progress achieved. In that connection, he evoked the Declaration and Appeal of the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Chairman of the Council of State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria regarding the establishment of a chemical weapons-free zone in the Balkan region. Romania would support the creation of such zones elsewhere in Europe, and on other continents, in the belief that they would make a concrete contribution to the process of eliminating these dangerous and inhuman weapons.
34. In his view, the final document of the Review Conference should urge the Conference on Disarmament to move forward generally in the implementation of its mandate and in particular to speed up its work on the preparation of the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which could, he hoped, be presented to the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

35. With regard to the effectiveness of the Convention, he noted with satisfaction that, since the First Review Conference in 1980, the number of States Parties had risen from 87 to 103 and now included all the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The Conference should make another appeal to all States which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

36. The documents submitted to the Conference by the secretariat gave the impression that, generally speaking, the Convention was being duly implemented. His delegation joined with the delegations which had stressed the need for full compliance with the Convention’s provisions, on the grounds that such behaviour was a factor in building confidence among States. It also considered that the Conference should explicitly reaffirm that the prohibition of bacteriological and toxin weapons applied without any limitation to all existing and future bacteriological agents or toxins that could be used for hostile purposes. Recent advances in genetics, microbiology and biotechnology were not such as to affect the Convention adversely. On the contrary, they enhanced its value.

37. Regarding article X of the Convention and international co-operation in the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, he considered that it would be appropriate to remind all States Parties explicitly of their obligations in that respect and to request those of them in a position to do so to take the necessary bilateral and multilateral steps to eliminate all obstacles to such co-operation and to expand it and make it more effective.

38. In conclusion, he stressed his delegation’s readiness to examine any constructive proposal aimed at reaffirming the full validity of the Convention and assured the President of its wholehearted co-operation.

39. Mr. Hac Team NGO (Democratic Kampuchea) recalled that Democratic Kampuchea had ratified the Convention on 4 February 1983, thus showing, at a time when its very survival was at stake, how great was its faith in international solidarity and how sincerely it was attached to respect for the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. For almost eight years his country had experienced the horrors of war, with Kampucheaans continuing to be the victims of flagrant violations of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Convention on Biological Weapons.

40. The use of toxin weapons in Kampuchea by the Vietnamese occupying forces had been established. During every dry season since 1979, the occupying forces had resorted to the spraying of toxic chemicals from MiG aircraft, the firing of poison gas shells and the contamination of foodstuffs and water sources. Almost all the provinces of Kampuchea had been affected. Most recently, on 17 July 1986, in the town of Kampot in southern Kampuchea, 50 inhabitants had died and 140 others had been poisoned through the contamination of foodstuffs. On 27 February 1986, in the district of Sisophon, in western Kampuchea, the occupying forces had poisoned the
springs. Ten inhabitants had died and 169 others had been poisoned. In February 1985, in Pailin, again in western Kampuchea, the occupying forces had fired poison gas shells. On several occasions, the Kampuchean resistance forces had succeeded in capturing members of the occupying forces equipped with gas masks. He said that photographs and a video tape by a Japanese journalist who had accompanied the Kampuchean forces were available to interested delegations in support of his allegations, and he also quoted extracts from a communication dated 5 April 1983 of the Minister in Charge of the Co-ordinating Committee for Public Health on the syndromes presented by the persons poisoned. There were also cases of indirect poisoning through contagion and of "residual contamination" in which women had given birth to children with serious birth defects. Given the formidable effects of those chemical and bacteriological substances, Kampuchean doctors were of the opinion that they could not have been manufactured by a poor country such as Viet Nam but only by a large country possessing an advanced biotechnological arsenal.

41. Of course, the perpetrators of those barbaric acts and their protectors sought to deny the facts. He wished to make it clear that his country wanted only friendly relations with all the countries of the world, including the Soviet Union, and that it asked was that the Soviet Union should cease to support Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea. He thanked the States participating in the Review Conference in advance for all that they were ready to do to help put an end to those crimes and acts of injustice against the Kampuchean people. He urged the whole international community to appeal for an end to those barbaric acts. The ending of those injustices through a peaceful and equitable settlement would undoubtedly be a positive factor in building international confidence and a concrete contribution to respect for the Convention. It must not be forgotten that what was happening today in Kampuchea could happen anywhere.

42. In conclusion, he requested the secretariat to circulate as an official document of the Review Conference the full text of the report on the use of toxins in Kampuchea which he had referred to in his intervention.

43.—Mr. KANAF (Islamic Republic of Iran) said, after recalling the principles and objectives of the 1972 Convention on Biological Weapons and the 1925 Geneva Protocol, as well as the undertakings entered into by States which had acceded to those instruments, that the world had changed since the First Review Conference. In recent years, the Geneva Protocol had been violated on several occasions by one of the States Parties, namely Iraq, whose use of chemical weapons had been confirmed by the reports of the teams of investigators sent to Iran by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in March 1984 (S/16433), April 1985 (S/17127) and February 1986 (S/17911). Mustard gas bombs and nerve agent bombs had been used by the Iraqi forces against Iranian positions, injuring many civilians and military personnel. The inadequacy of the international reaction to those violations and the absence of any provisions for collective action against the violator had encouraged Iraq to continue to flout the fundamental principle underlying international law in cases of armed conflict. On 8 September 1986, actually during the inauguration of the Second Review Conference, Iraq had still been using chemical weapons in the Sheik Salah Downward area and in the Bemou Heights. Thus, 61 years after the adoption of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which declared the use of chemical weapons to be inhumane and immoral, Iraq was still repeatedly resorting to those weapons in violation of the Protocol.
44. His delegation considered the Second Review Conference to be a good opportunity to emphasize the need to respect the Geneva Protocol. It should set up machinery through which compliance could be assured and guaranteed. It should also press Iraq to commit itself not to repeat the use of chemical and toxin weapons and it should once again condemn the use of chemical weapons as a war crime. Lastly, the Conference should call for a total ban on the export to Iraq of chemical substances and related technology that could be used to manufacture chemical weapons.

45. It was, nevertheless, encouraging to note that the number of States Parties to the Convention had risen from 87 to 103 and now included all the permanent members of the Security Council. It was to be hoped that those States which had not yet signed and ratified the Convention would do so and that its universal acceptability would thus be enhanced.

46. Mr. AL-KADHI (Iraq) said that the Iraqi Government had signed the Convention on Biological Weapons in 1975 and was making arrangements to ratify it. Iraq complied with all the commitments deriving from the Convention and from the 1925 Geneva Protocol to which it was also a party. In his delegation's view, the best way of preventing recourse to bacteriological and nuclear weapons was to prevent armed conflict between peoples. If, on the other hand, the international community accepted wars and the escalation of violence, the countries and peoples threatened must defend themselves by all the means at their disposal. To attain the Convention's objectives it was the responsibility of all States to prevent conflicts. The responsibility of the nuclear Powers, which had failed to arrive at a complete agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and tests, should also be stressed. In the absence of such agreement, the Convention could not be fully implemented. Disarmament should lead to global conventions.

47. Given the repeated allegations of the representative of Iran, his delegation was obliged to demonstrate that Iran had violated the Convention repeatedly whereas Iraq had complied to the full with the obligations under it. First of all, Iran had tried to occupy Iraqi territory by force, but when that attempt failed the Iranian Government had drawn up a plan for resort to chemical weapons. At the present moment, the Iranian leaders were striving to put that plan into effect. Thus, on 27 February 1986, at Geneva, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs had said: "We have produced chemical weapons but we are not going to use them". That statement had been published in the Journal de Genève of 28 February 1986. Why produce chemical weapons if they were not going to be used? The Iranian Prime Minister had made a similar declaration on Iranian television on 28 August 1986. Only a few days ago, Iran had been accused by the Iranian news media of resorting to chemical weapons. Through those allegations, the Iranian authorities were aiming at a number of objectives: to use chemical weapons in the new offensive which Iran was preparing against Iraq, to demonstrate to the current Review Conference that Iran was not taking any reprehensible measures, and lastly to justify attacks on civilian objectives such as those which it had recently launched.

48. The dangerous plan should be brought to the international community's attention. In fact, Iran was using the Conference, and other international meetings, to continue its aggression against a sovereign State. It should be remembered that international law was an indivisible whole. If one of its aspects was to be stressed, the rest must also be taken into account. Iran only took from international law what was in line with its régime and its
interests. Iraq possessed the right to self-defence, the right to defend its people and its territory. It would use every means to that end, because it was forced to do so by Iran.

49. Mrs. GARCIA DONOSO (Ecuador) said that her Government had always supported the efforts of the international community to bring about general and complete disarmament. That had always been its position in the General Assembly of the United Nations and in the First Committee. It must not be forgotten that there was a close link between disarmament and development, since general disarmament would free resources that could be used for the economic and social advancement of the developing countries.

50. Ecuador complied with the multilateral agreements on halting the arms race and on disarmament, in particular the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (1972). Ecuador was, moreover, one of the sponsors of General Assembly resolution 37/98 C on a procedure for enhancing compliance with the Convention and of resolution 37/98 D on procedures to uphold the authority of the Protocol because it regarded them as two important instruments in the service of the objective of the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. The use of chemical and bacteriological weapons was as atrocious as that of nuclear weapons.

51. Her delegation attached great importance to the current Review Conference as providing States Parties with an opportunity not only to reaffirm their devotion to the principles and objectives of the Convention but also to review the effectiveness of its provisions and the compliance of States Parties. In that connection, she believed that arrangements should be made to review the Convention every five years, as an appropriate means of pursuing the Convention's objectives.

52. Some articles of the Convention merited the Conference's particular attention. Examples were article VI (on complaints in cases of a State Party's breach of its obligations and the investigations that could be carried out following such complaints) and article VII (on assistance of a State Party to any other Party exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the Convention). Close attention should also be paid, however, to article IX, which recognized the effective prohibition of chemical weapons as an important objective, since, unfortunately, no agreement had yet been reached on an effective and total ban on the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Regarding article X, Ecuador wished to reaffirm that it was in favour of greater international co-operation in all aspects of the peaceful use of bacteriological agents and toxins (transfer and exchange of information, training of personnel, etc.).

53. Ecuador had always faithfully complied with the obligations laid down in article I of the Convention. It did not possess, had never possessed, and had no intention of possessing or utilizing, microbiological or other biological agents or toxins for hostile purposes. It would support all efforts to strengthen the Convention and give favourable consideration to any proposal to that end. Such efforts would enhance confidence among nations and improve the international atmosphere. If all States Parties, in particular the great
Powers, demonstrated the political will to eliminate arsenals of chemical and bacteriological agents, through effective measures, the work of the Review Conference would be an important contribution to the celebration of the World Year of Peace.

54. **Mr. SHAFT (Islamic Republic of Iran)**, exercising his right of reply, said that the statement of the representative of Iraq contained false allegations regarding the war that had been forced on the Islamic Republic of Iran by Iraq, and he drew attention to a number of untruths. For example, Iraq denied having used chemical weapons, although such use had been confirmed by the reports of the Security Council to which Mr. Kamaly had referred. That showed the gap between Iraq's words, in particular those of its representative at the current Conference, and its acts. Furthermore, the representative of Iraq was contradicting himself. In fact, while denying that Iraq had used chemical weapons, he declared that threatened countries and peoples must defend themselves by all the means available to them. By such a statement, the Iraqi Government was clearly rejecting the law and humanitarian principles that governed armed conflict. His delegation considered those two examples sufficient to place the participants in the Conference in a position to judge the truthfulness of the Iraqi representative's statements.

55. **Mr. AL HADDADI (Iraq)**, exercising his right of reply, said that the remarks of the representative of Iran consisted of lying statements and fallacious allegations, many of which were only too familiar. For his own part, he could only reaffirm the position of his Government and his country, Iraq possessed no chemical or bacteriological weapons, was not producing or stockpiling any, and was not using any. Iraq had already made peace proposals to Iran, and had accepted all the initiatives in that sense, not only those coming from the United Nations but those from other organizations such as the recent appeals of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries or the Islamic Conference. The Iraqi Government had recently called on the Iranian leaders to accept peace, to conclude a non-aggression pact with Iraq and to establish good-neighbourly relations between the two countries that would be conducive to peace in the region and to development. His delegation urged the Conference to persuade Iran to accept the Iraqi peace initiative and to listen to the voice of reason, failing which the current Conference would lead to nothing but a set of resolutions leaving the chief cause of war untouched.

56. **Mr. SHAFT (Islamic Republic of Iran)**, exercising his right of reply, said that he would not revert to the question of the use of chemical weapons, a matter on which he had already made his position known. On the other hand, as far as the peaceful sentiments so eloquently expressed by Iraq at the current Conference and at other meetings were concerned, it should be remembered that six years earlier, on 22 September 1980, the Iraqi régime had launched a war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran by crossing the Iranian frontier over its length of 1,352 kilometres and penetrating 80 kilometres into Iranian territory. As for the desire for peace supposedly inspiring the Iraqi leaders, he would simply recall that according to an Associated Press report of 25 December 1980, the Iraqi President had said at a Cabinet meeting that all - a regions occupied by Iraqi troops in the Iranian province of Khuzestan or to the west of it would remain under Iraqi domination and would be annexed to the map of Iraq. According to another report from the same agency, dated 18 January 1981, the Iraqi Minister of Information had said "Iraq has now reached its frontier with Iran and will never withdraw from the position it occupies, even if its armed forces must stay on the present front
line for another 10 years. Now, in those circumstances, could the Iraqi régime claim that it wanted peace while all the time engaging in the massive and generalized use of chemical weapons, contrary to all humanitarian laws and international conventions? Not wishing to cite other examples, he believed that mere reference to those violations would be enough to demonstrate the real nature of the Iraqi régime.

57. The President said that the Conference had thus concluded its general debate on the operation of the Convention. The wide-ranging discussion had been extremely useful and much common ground had emerged. Despite a few references to cases of violations of obligations under the Convention, it had been generally felt that the Convention had stood the test of time well and had even gained in importance. Several proposals regarding institutional arrangements, supplementary instruments and unilateral undertakings for ensuring greater transparency and thus strengthening confidence had already been formulated. The general debate had also shown that the Convention was attracting much more attention than at the First Review Conference in 1980. In conclusion, he expressed pleasure at the spirit of goodwill and co-operation that had marked the first part of the Conference's work.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.