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CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS

Letter dated 12 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of
the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a note verbale dated 7 April 1988 from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Government⁸ of the States participating in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, containing an appeal for the conclusion at the earliest possible date of a convention on a global ban of chemical weapons (see annex),

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 63 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Alfred under COUNT YORK

* A/43/50.

ANNEX

Note verbale

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

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

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

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

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

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

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