

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Fields.

Mr. FIELDS (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, the 1982 session of the Committee on Disarmament is drawing to a close. In the brief span of the abbreviated summer part of this session, we have, I believe, achieved some modest accomplishments. My remarks today will focus on these areas of work where progress has been made, and I will as well comment on several issues where our position has been either misunderstood or misinterpreted.

First, with regard to a prohibition on chemical weapons, my delegation would like to register a degree of satisfaction at the progress that was made in the chemical weapons Working Group. The Chairman of the Group, the distinguished Ambassador of Poland, Ambassador Sujka, deserves the gratitude of all delegations, in particular for his inauguration of a method of work which allowed substantial results to be achieved. The nine contact groups were able to cover an impressive amount of material, and to report results to the Committee which clearly indicate that substantive progress has been made since we began our work in August. These results will provide an excellent basis for further progress at the Committee's 1983 session.

A number of other delegations have made important contributions to progress toward the prohibition of chemical weapons, an objective that we all agree is a matter of the greatest importance for the Committee. The contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany on the important question of verification of a chemical weapons convention is particularly noteworthy.

My delegation has also taken note of the proposals of the Soviet Union submitted to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which have also been put forward in the Committee. These proposals seem to indicate a certain degree of flexibility on two of the key issues related to verification of a chemical weapons convention which, of course, we all welcome. We look forward to further amplification by the Soviet Union of the particulars of these proposals. There are, of course, many other unresolved verification issues. We hope that mutually acceptable solutions will be found to overcome these difficulties and thus allow progress to be made.

In sum, my delegation believes that the work of the Committee this year on a prohibition of chemical weapons has been advanced, largely through intensive work in the space of this brief six-week session. We hope these achievements are an indication that even greater advances will be possible during the course of our 1983 session.

With regard to the work of the nuclear test ban Working Group, we are, of course, disappointed that our efforts to begin substantive work under the mandate were blocked by one group. By comparison with the productive results in the chemical weapons Working Group, perhaps the best that can be said, in view of our failure to adopt a programme of work, is that in wrestling with this problem we have had several enlightening discussions related to issues of verification and compliance.