Mr. HANSEN (United States of America): Today I would like to devote my statement to the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Rolf Ekéus of Sweden, the negotiations in the 1987 session are well under way. The organization of work into clusters, as suggested by Ambassador Ekéus, has given new structure to the discussions and seems to have helped them move ahead. The cluster co-ordinators -- Mr. Nieuwenhuys of Belgium, Mr. Macedo of Mexico, and Dr. Krutzsch of the German Democratic Republic -- are making important contributions, as well, to advancing the complex and detailed work of negotiating the provisions of the Convention.

Clearly, the work on a chemical weapons ban has been intensifying over the last year. In part, this can be attributed to the commitment by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, made at the November 1985 Summit in Geneva, to accelerate efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention on this matter. Both the United States and Soviet delegations have helped to turn this commitment into practical progress.

Since the beginning of the 1987 CD session, important changes have appeared in the position of some delegations, and the United States Government is carefully assessing the political and substantive significance of these developments. In this context, I would note that we welcome these developments but emphasize that we will not accept a watered-down, ineffective convention. The negotiation of an effective convention is a complex undertaking in which details are of great significance. The CD must therefore pursue this objective with appropriate care and deliberation.

That said, my statement today contains suggestions and proposals I hope will advance the further work of the Committee in a number of important areas.

Over the course of the chemical weapons negotiations the United States has stressed that effective verification provisions are essential for building confidence in compliance. But, clearly, confidence is not something that