

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

The situation on outer space arms control has also changed materially since last year. Next month will begin the United States-Soviet bilateral negotiations on defence and space weapons. This Conference could begin its complementary multilateral work with a comprehensive examination of existing multilateral agreements. There is much that the Conference can usefully consider in this vital area, as reflected in the mandate for an ad hoc committee proposed by a group of Western States. But the insistence of some members on a negotiating mandate threatens to leave the Conference on Disarmament out of the space arms control picture altogether.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

Unfortunately, the present situation, though undoubtedly less pessimistic than a year ago, can still not be described as favourable for disarmament efforts. In order to describe the situation, let me quote the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, K.U. Chernenko, who, at the beginning of this month, said:

"Has the United States abolished even one of its programmes aimed at achieving military superiority? No. On the contrary, the arms production line is working at full capacity to achieve this goal. Or has the deployment of new American nuclear missiles in Western Europe stopped? No again".

The full text of the quoted interview can be found in document CD/548.

As has been unambiguously demonstrated by the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, an overwhelming majority of States share the view of the urgency of undertaking decisive disarmament endeavours on Earth and on the inadmissibility of the arms race in outer space. A similar opinion has been recently expressed by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania in their Joint Declaration of New Delhi. These issues have undoubtedly become the most burning questions of our time. Over 60 resolutions on various disarmament aspects adopted by the General Assembly last year serve as a convincing proof of the growing uneasiness of world opinion over the continuous spiral of the arms race. As many as 23 of those resolutions are of high significance for the Conference on Disarmament, since they entrust specific responsibilities to this single multilateral negotiating body. Even a cursory analysis of these resolutions make it evident that most of them are directly or indirectly related to nuclear weapons, thus outlining the desired priorities for our work.

(Mr. Turbanski, Poland)

Some items on our agenda, though separate and apparently independent, fall into line with efforts to prevent nuclear war. A nuclear test ban and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament are -- if achieved -- the best guarantee of avoiding nuclear catastrophe. This applies likewise to prevention of an arms race in outer space. Though extremely complicated in the technological sense, the interrelationship between the further militarization of outer space as envisaged in some strategic initiatives and nuclear arms is strikingly clear with regard to its destabilizing effect.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The specific measures suggested in the Declaration stem from a serious study of all the elements involved that has made it possible to carry out a sound and realistic choice of measures which actually deserve priority attention. Thus, in the Declaration we find the following evidently pertinent exhortations:

"We reiterate our appeal for an all-embracing halt to the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Such a halt would greatly facilitate negotiations. Two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a comprehensive test ban treaty.

"Outer space must be used for the benefit of mankind as a whole, not as a battle-ground of the future. We therefore call for the prohibition of the development, testing, production, deployment and use of all space weapons. An arms race in space would be enormously costly, and have grave destabilizing effects. It would also endanger a number of arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

"We further urge the nuclear weapon States to immediately halt the testing of all kinds of nuclear weapons, and to conclude, at an early date, a treaty on a nuclear weapon test ban. Such a treaty would be a major step towards ending the continuous modernization of nuclear arsenals."