

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 13 June 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Valery LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 1025th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Today, the Conference will continue its focused debate on agenda item 3, entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”. In accordance with the previously established schedule, the work of this plenary meeting is devoted to the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, including those in the context of document CD/1679. The following countries are on the list of speakers: Pakistan, Cuba, China, Belarus, Italy, Ireland, Brazil, France, Russian, the United States of America, Argentina and Sweden.

I now give the floor to the first speaker, the Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Masood Khan.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, you have brought a new style of leadership to the Conference on Disarmament. In your presidency you have seamlessly blended substance and procedure and thus demonstrated how we can commence negotiations on pressing core issues, if we choose to do so. This method of work fits well into the six CD Presidents’ common approach for the year.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 21 on 8 June. We particularly share the Group’s concern over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space. This trend upsets strategic stability, disrupts arms control processes and increases the risks of further militarization of space and an arms race in outer space.

It is in the common interest of all mankind to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes. The United Nations Charter obligates us not to use or threaten to use force in international relations. That obligation includes Member States’ space activities. The weaponization of outer space is not science fiction; it is a growing and distinct possibility. Weapons in space would intensify wars on our globe. Therefore, measures to prevent an arms race would help avert a grave danger to global peace and security.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole negotiating disarmament forum, has the primary responsibility to negotiate and conclude a multilateral treaty or treaties on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Last year, the United Nations General Assembly once again recognized the growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures designed to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. It called for the consolidation and reinforcement of the legal regime applicable to outer space to enhance its effectiveness. The General Assembly also gave two specific directions with regard to the CD. It invited the CD to complete the examination and updating of the mandate contained in its decision of 13 February 1992 and to establish an ad hoc committee as early as possible during the 2006 session. We should take this as a deadline. And it urged States conducting activities in outer space, as well as States interested in conducting such activities, to keep the CD informed of the progress of bilateral and multilateral negotiations on the matter.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The role of space technology in our day-to-day life has become pervasive. Never before have information, intelligence, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation and even political and strategic decision-making been so dependent on space-based dual-use technologies, which are themselves witnessing rapid growth. Hundreds of satellites direct the operations of the Internet, television, and precision targeting by military weapons, to mention a few examples. This growth will lead to weaponization of outer space if countervailing measures are not taken. Moreover, the distinction between civil and military uses, applications and assets is theoretical. This myth in fact hampers cogent discussion on PAROS.

Space security is an imperative. It is not an option.

In the context of the CD, some delegations project PAROS as an issue solely linked to the FMCT, demanding removal of this linkage to facilitate negotiations on a fissile material treaty. PAROS is not a parasitic issue, but an issue that deserves attention on its own merits. In fact, all four core issues - disarmament, a fissile material treaty, PAROS and negative security assurances - form the basis of our work in the CD.

The objective of PAROS is preventative - to stem the induction of space weapons through surveillance and verification. The existing regime - comprising the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1984 Moon Agreement and the abrogated ABM Treaty of 1972 - has gaping holes which can only be filled by a new legal instrument.

We have consistently argued, even during this session, that the time is ripe, indeed over-ripe, for focused discussions and negotiations on PAROS. Possible elements of a treaty, presented by seven countries in 2002, are already on the table. Year after year, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted resolutions on PAROS. China and Russia have circulated documents on definitions, verification, transparency and CBMs. UNIDIR-led conferences, the last held this year in March, have enhanced our understanding of the need and the means to block the development and deployment of weapons in outer space.

Substantial work was done in this regard by the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS from 1985 to 1992. Since 1992, diplomats inside and outside the CD, as well as policymakers and officials of the military-industrial complex, have discussed the definition, scope and applications of the proposed treaty on PAROS. In the past year, since I started representing Pakistan in the CD, I have witnessed heightened activity and debate on the subject. Governments, industry, civil society - all have shown keen interest in ensuring exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We appreciate the flexibility that was shown by some countries in 2003 to facilitate agreement on the A5 proposal based on a comprehensive and balanced programme of action. Now it is only reasonable to start work within that framework without caveats and diversions.

Mr. President, our delegation especially appreciated your statement of 8 June. This statement adds mass and specificity to our discussion by answering a number of questions with remarkable technical precision. A discussion on the three obligations - non-deployment, non-use of force or threat of force, and non-proliferation - embedded in your proposal for a new treaty on

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space can turn the CD's wheels for months to come. The papers presented by China, Canada and Sweden have further deepened our basic comprehension of the underlying concepts and issues.

We also appreciate the Canadian proposal to enhance the dialogue between the various United Nations bodies with an interest in outer space, including the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), ITU, the CD and the United Nations General Assembly. A number of informal meetings are being organized by these forums, but they do not lead to any substantive outcome. The "adjacency" of these organizations on outer space issues needs to be changed into a genuine synergy for a results-oriented dialogue. Confidence-building and transparency measures should culminate in a proper legal instrument. The stumbling block is the CD, which remains deadlocked over the need to develop consensus on a programme of work. This has a negative impact on space security.

Even as space-faring nations promote more cooperation amongst themselves, some of them in their military doctrines are placing greater emphasis on the security uses of outer space. Military doctrines that seek full-spectrum dominance projected through and from space are counterproductive and jeopardize the security of all humanity. Defence capability is legitimate but aspirations for impregnable defences tend to undermine deterrence, and lead to new instruments of war and to an arms race.

Pakistan does not claim to be a space-faring nation, but we are a space-threshold State. We are one of those countries which realized the importance of space technology rather early. Pakistan's national space agency, SUPARCO, was established in 1961. We have indigenously developed two communication satellites which were launched in 1990 and 2001. Currently we are operating a leased satellite, PAKSAT-I, using the orbital slot of 38 degrees east longitude assigned to Pakistan.

SUPARCO provides such services as remote sensing, a geographical information system, land surveying and miscellaneous atmospheric science information. It also runs an Institute of Space Technology offering degrees in aerospace engineering and communication systems engineering. The ongoing research and development work for peaceful uses of outer space involves the development of a satellite, PAKSAT-1R, and a satellite launch vehicle. Like other countries, Pakistan also relies heavily on the international network of satellites for communication and financial services.

The outer space usable for servicing the planet earth is limited and prone to irreversible damage. Its judicious use is of paramount importance to all nations - the providers as well as the users of space services. The continued prosperity and welfare of nations hinges on use of space technologies. To jeopardize the security of such a vital and precious resource would indeed be a colossal mistake.

Let me end my statement with the laconic remark of Dr. Patricia Lewis, Director of UNIDIR. At the end of a conference on PAROS in March 2005, she said: "Space is for everybody, and havoc in space means havoc for everybody."

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for your kind words addressed to the Chair. Now I give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Mr. León González. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): First of all, let me explain that it was my Ambassador's intention to make this statement, but the consultations currently under way on the Human Rights Council, have, at the last minute, prevented his being present here, and he asked me to read the statement on his behalf, and that is what I now intend to do.

Mr. President, we are happy to see you chairing the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly when dealing with such important debates related to the prevention of the arms race in outer space. You may rest assured of cooperation from the delegation of Cuba in performing your duties.

First of all, I wish to state that Cuba fully supports the statement made on PAROS by the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 21 on 8 June 2006. I would also like to reiterate that Cuba supports the setting up of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space immediately. We believe that this is an urgent matter, and we are convinced that this Conference has the capacity to undertake it and is technically prepared to do so. We would not be starting from scratch. Sufficient work has already been accomplished which has built up over the 10 consecutive years between 1985 and 1994, when an ad hoc committee was set up to discuss definitions, principles, existing legal instruments and confidence-building measures, among other matters.

Those 10 years of discussion and others that followed mean that, technically speaking, work on PAROS is at a more advanced stage than discussions on an FMCT. Some delegations which are opposed to initiating negotiations on PAROS argue that elements still remain to be clarified and that there is a lack of agreement on some of the topics which fall within the area of PAROS discussions. Those same delegations forget that the same applies to the FMCT, where disagreements persist on certain matters, such as, for example, the scope of a future treaty, and yet this has not prevented them from advocating a start to negotiations.

The international community has once again expressed its unequivocal wish to prevent an arms race in outer space through the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolutions 60/54 and 60/66 following a positive vote by the overwhelming majority of the members of that body. Resolution 60/54 was adopted with the support of 180 States, with the United States of America and Israel voting against. The decision on resolution 60/66 was similar - 178 States voted in favour while the United States of America was once again opposed and Israel abstained.

As a result, virtually all the members of this Conference supported the above-mentioned resolution 60/54 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in operative paragraph 2 of which the Assembly reaffirmed "its recognition, as stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not in and of itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space, that the

(Mr. González, Cuba)

regime plays a significant role in the prevention of an arms race in that environment, that there is a need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness and that it is important to comply strictly with existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral”.

In other words, virtually unanimously, the members of this Conference recognize that the present regime governing activities in outer space, is not sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space, and the logical next step therefore is that it must be strengthened.

I understand that some might argue that, despite that overwhelming support, there is nevertheless no consensus to initiate negotiations based on the results of the above-mentioned decisions by the United Nations General Assembly. On the basis of a cold, mathematical calculation, we would say they are apparently right, but it would be worth asking the following questions. Does any State in this Conference oppose the non-placement of any kind of arms in outer space? And if there is no such State, how can we guarantee that no weapons of any kind will be placed in outer space? We believe that answering these questions would help to define where each of the members of this Conference stands with regard to the PAROS issue.

Adopting legally binding measures to prevent the arms race in outer space is the most effective means to strengthen the existing legal regime in this area. Ways and means of devising such measures can vary, from negotiation of a new treaty to the adoption of an additional protocol to one of the existing conventions, as was underlined in the formal plenary on 8 June by the distinguished Ambassador of Sweden when she reminded us of the conclusions of the international Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission.

Some measures could be of immediate application, subject to further development as part of a corpus of legally binding measures, and by this I wish to refer specifically to the subject before us today, that is to say, transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space.

Those countries which currently have the technological capacity to reach and operate in outer space should officially declare that they will never place any kind of weapon in outer space. That undertaking could take political shape in the form of a declaration by the United Nations General Assembly, and then be legally codified through the negotiation of a new legal instrument in this Conference. These States could also provide detailed information on the activities that they are conducting in outer space, to demonstrate that they have no plans to place weapons in outer space.

It should be pointed out, particularly for those who believe that there are still matters which need clarification as regards PAROS, that in the so-called five Ambassadors' proposal contained in Conference document CD/1693/Rev.1 on a programme of work, with the mandate on PAROS, an appropriate mechanism would be set up in the Conference on Disarmament to clarify the outstanding queries, so that if the five Ambassadors' proposal is accepted, there would be a way of resolving those doubts, if there really were a will and a commitment to prevent the arms race in outer space.

(Mr. González, Cuba)

When the time came for negotiations on PAROS, we would include in the draft treaty sections relating to transparency and confidence-building measures. For example, in relation to confidence-building measures, each State party to the future convention would report on its space programmes, declaring the location and reach of its launch facilities and the purposes and parameters of objects to be launched into space, as well as notifying launch activities. The corpus of legal measures to be negotiated should set up verification mechanisms which would confirm that States parties were fulfilling their obligations.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me to express Cuba's appreciation of the work done by the authorities in your country and China in connection with PAROS, which has provided us with extremely useful additional material for our present discussions and for the negotiations when they commence. These thanks also go to the secretariat, which has done an excellent job in preparing for these structured debates.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhang Junan. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. ZHANG (China) (translated from Chinese): At the formal meeting of 8 June, the Chinese delegation already put forward our position on the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space. Today, I would like to state our position on the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space.

In our view, transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space activities can help reduce tension by limiting the possibility of countries forming erroneous perceptions. They are also conducive to enhanced mutual trust, to broader cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space by all States, to safeguarding the security of outer space activities and to achieving the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

It should be stressed that, while TCBMs, as an interim measure, can serve as a starting point for, and complementary element in, efforts to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument that prohibits the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, they cannot replace a legal instrument. Negotiating and concluding a legal instrument of that kind remains the best way to attain the goal set by the international community of preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. This point should be generally agreed before the parties concerned embark on the discussion and implementation of TCBMs.

TCBMs can take the form of a unilateral commitment or a multilateral agreement, or they can be provided in an article of a treaty. Our discussions of TCBMs should be linked to the negotiations on a new international legal instrument on outer space: TCBMs should form a constituent part of the treaty so as to have more practical significance.

China advocates the conclusion of a new arms control agreement for outer space in order to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against space objects. This is already contained in document CD/1679. Given the complexities involved in the verification of outer space activities, which have implications for the security interests of all

(Mr. Zhang, China)

countries, and also the current technical constraints and immense financial costs of verification, it would be extremely difficult to negotiate a treaty provision on verification. One way forward could be to put on hold the verification issue until conditions are right, and to negotiate a treaty temporarily without verification provisions. In this scenario, TCBMs could provide a measure of additional support for the above-mentioned new treaty and would strengthen States parties' aspirations for, and confidence in, compliance with the treaty by all signatories. Of course, the TCBMs sketched out in document CD/1679 are still only an outline and will be fleshed out by incorporating more consensus views from the detailed discussions under way. The final legal language in the treaty will be worked out through the joint efforts of all parties.

The purpose of TCBMs is to promote trust by reducing misunderstandings and to preserve stability by preventing conflicts, and, for that reason, it is important that the principles of undiminished security for all and voluntary engagement should be upheld. More detailed views and suggestions on TCBMs have been reflected in document CD/1778, jointly prepared by China and the Russian Federation.

China's space activities have been conducted with a high degree of transparency. China has acceded to the Registration Convention and provides data on its space launches as required by that Convention. When satellites are launched in China, China submits timely reports on their type and functions. Afterwards the launches are registered with the United Nations. The reports submitted by China on its manned space flights were particularly detailed and live video broadcasts were beamed across the world of the spacecraft being launched, in orbit and returning to earth. The white paper on China's space activities issued on 22 November 2000 by the Information Office of the Chinese State Council sets out the aims and current status of China's programme for the peaceful development of space technologies and its future plans for the programme, as well as its aspirations to strengthen international cooperation in this area. An updated version of the white paper will be issued later in 2006.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Belarus, Mr. Sergei Aleinik. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. ALEINIK (Belarus) (translated from Russian): Belarus considers that the 1963 Partial Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1969 Moon Agreement, and also the 1968 Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the 1972 Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects and the 1975 Registration Convention remain the key legally binding instruments of international law directly regulating States' activities in the field of strengthening confidence and security in outer space.

In addition, there is a set of legally non-binding principles governing the conduct of space activities which have been developed by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Important additional sources for those devising CBMs are the special report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "Study on the application of confidence-building measures in outer space" (A/48/305), issued in November 1993, the 2002 Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the 2004 European Code of Conduct for Space Debris Mitigation. Specific views on the desirability of devising additional

(Mr. Aleinik, Belarus)

CBMs were also expressed during UNISPACE III, the Third World Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which was held in 1999. Thus, the delegation of Belarus notes that at present there is an abundance of proposals for the adoption of additional confidence-building and security-building measures in outer space.

In this context, Belarus is of the view that new CBMs in outer space should be aimed first and foremost at strengthening existing international legal instruments. We are convinced that, in view of the specific characteristics of the issue of space-related CBMs, any work on drafting rules in this area should be carried out by the Conference on Disarmament in close cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

At present, many States and non-governmental organizations are actively supporting the idea of drafting codes of conduct for States in strengthening security in outer space. It is frequently underlined in this respect that in the context of a lack of consensus between key Powers concerning the desirability of starting work on a draft treaty on PAROS, the adoption of a universal code of conduct on space-related CBMs would be the most feasible option.

Our State has a national space programme. Belarus plans to launch its own satellite into an orbit around the earth on 28 June 2006. In this connection, we recognize the value of developing the aforementioned codes of conduct for strengthening security in outer space. Such tools are particularly necessary to enhance transparency, address the problem of space debris and improve the efficiency of monitoring systems for ensuring the safety of traffic in circumterrestrial outer space. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that by their very nature, these instruments are not legally binding. Belarus believes that genuine space security can be achieved only if a comprehensive treaty is adopted on the prohibition of the deployment of weapons in outer space.

In our opinion, the first real contribution to the cause of preventing the weaponization of outer space was the pledge by the Russian Federation not to be the first to deploy a weapon of any kind in outer space. In this connection, we would like to point out that on 23 June 2005, a similar declaration was made by the heads of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. In the light of the above, Belarus supports the idea that all States which have the capability to launch spacecraft and programmes for space exploration and research should subscribe to this pledge not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. We believe that a step-by-step strategy in the sphere of strengthening space security can prove successful only if all States with a space potential refrain in actual practice from space weaponization and move step by step towards the conclusion of legally binding instruments which will guarantee the complete renunciation of the placement of weapons in outer space.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Belarus for his statement and now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Carlo Trezza. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Before addressing the issue to which this session is dedicated - transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space - I wish to make some remarks based on the intense and fruitful discussions we have had in past days on the general issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My delegation fully identifies itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Austria, Ambassador Petritsch, on behalf of the European Union.

The question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has been on the international agenda since practically the beginning of the space era, and we thank the secretariat for reminding us, through its very useful documentation, of the past efforts made within the CD to deal with this issue.

Meaningful work has already been done in the past by the CD, especially within the framework of Ad Hoc Committees established from 1985 to 1994. This work could be a useful precedent and a term of reference for our future deliberations. The issue of PAROS is still relevant: the more the international community becomes dependent on outer space for its economic, scientific, security and developmental needs, the more important it is to operate in a safe and secure space environment. The danger represented by space debris in a possible hostile scenario is an additional source of major concern. Fortunately, an arms race has not yet started; our deliberations in the CD may have been useful in avoiding it. But, as some delegations have indicated, it is preferable to prevent an arms race at the outset, rather than to counter it once it has been initiated.

We cannot ignore the difficulties ahead, which were correctly and eloquently highlighted by you, Mr. President, in your capacity as Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, both in your general statement and in your interesting remarks on scope and basic definitions. Little progress has been made for many years on those key issues.

We still encounter difficulties in reaching a consensus on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For many delegations, including mine, an FMCT is the priority in the CD. But we have heard no dissenting voice so far on the principle that the CD, as it conducts FMCT negotiations, could continue with work on other issues, including PAROS. Moreover, my delegation acknowledges the value of the additional indications given by the delegations of Russia and China on 7 August 2003 on a possible PAROS mandate. Like other delegations, we find them encouraging.

Our deliberations cannot evolve in a vacuum. As mentioned by other delegations, and in particular by the distinguished representative of Canada, we believe that the dialogue between the various bodies with an interest in outer space should be enhanced. I refer in particular to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I suggest we consider the possibility of inviting the Chairman of that Committee to brief us on questions relevant to our work, including the issue of space debris, at the appropriate time.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

Now that we have initiated substantive work under your able chairmanship, we must also think about how to sustain our activities in a credible way. We share the view expressed by our new Korean colleague, Ambassador Chang Dong-hee, that “addressing this will require building up trust based on the existing commitments and taking a gradual approach, starting by addressing easily agreeable and immediate issues and eventually leading up to the more complex and difficult ones”.

The first obvious step based on existing commitments should be - in our view - wider adherence to the Outer Space Treaty, which goes back, as we know, to 1967. It was recalled during this session that only 98 countries have joined that Treaty so far. Not all CD members are party to it. It is high time we fill this lacuna. Another option, based on existing commitments, is the recent proposal, mentioned by our Swedish colleague Ambassador Borsini Bonnier and put forward recently in the Report of the international Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, of an additional protocol to the Outer Space Treaty prohibiting all weapons in outer space.

Several delegations, including yours, Mr. President, have also mentioned the possibility of establishing a moratorium on the placement of weapons in outer space. Such a unilateral undertaking could be examined as a possible confidence-building measure, which could foster further progress.

The EU presidency has recognized a growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space, and indicated that such measures should be discussed as a first step. Two resolutions of the General Assembly - 60/66 and 60/54 - mention confidence-building measures in outer space. In particular, resolution 60/66 is entirely dedicated to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. The CD, and in particular its members who voted in favour of it, should build on those documents. Resolution 60/66 reiterates the need for increased transparency and confirms the importance of confidence-building measures as conducive means of ensuring the attainment of the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It also invites all Member States to inform the Secretary-General of their views on the advisability of further developing international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures. We believe that our discussion today could be instrumental in encouraging responses by Member States to the General Assembly's request.

In its last report in 1994, the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS established by the CD noted that some delegations had proposed that the Committee develop a regime of notification of launches of space objects and ballistic missiles. “Rules of the road” relating to space debris, manoeuvres in outer space and the establishment of “keep-out zones” were also mentioned. Those measures could be considered even today. More recently, document CD/1778, dated 22 May 2006, makes a clear reference to transparency and confidence-building measures as a means to enhance mutual trust, and lists some of them, such as the exchange of information on space, visits by experts, notifications of planned spacecraft launches and manoeuvres, consultations.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

Let me note that some of these suggestions are already contemplated by an existing instrument. In its statement last week, the EU presidency mentioned that transparency measures on the launching of objects into space are fundamental to space security, and in this connection underlined the role of the Hague International Code of Conduct. In fact the HCOC already contemplates annual declarations, pre-launch notifications, international observers on launch sites for ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles. These measures of transparency and space confidence are relevant to our deliberations and complementary to improved discipline in space management. It would be useful - we believe - if the rotating chairman of the Hague Code of Conduct could address the Conference on Disarmament on these issues in order to advance our work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you very much, Your Excellency. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ireland, Mary Whelan. You have the floor.

Ms. WHELAN (Ireland): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of our fullest cooperation.

My delegation shares the concerns expressed by many others on the need to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Ireland has been a member of the European Space Agency since its establishment in 1975 and is an active participant in ESA programmes in space science, satellite communications and navigation, and launcher development. Space plays an ever-larger and important role in the daily lives of all countries. We in Ireland are increasingly dependent on services provided from outer space. In addition, we acknowledge that earth observation provides a level of assurance concerning the conduct and intentions of States that is essential to the maintenance of global security. In our view, nothing should be permitted to jeopardize these vital activities in outer space. Accordingly, as Austria, speaking for the European Union, said last week on our behalf, we believe that these activities should be developed in a peaceful environment and that an arms race in outer space should be prevented. My delegation has consistently said that we would like to see this Conference embark without delay on a process that could lead to an agreement to prohibit the weaponization of outer space.

However, pending progress on such an initiative, we believe that there are a number of measures that could be taken to increase transparency in space activities and otherwise to build confidence in the peaceful intentions of all space-faring States. In our view such measures would provide enhanced security for every State.

All of us in this room accepted at the last General Assembly that “transparency in military matters is an essential element for building a climate of trust and confidence between States worldwide and that a better flow of objective information on military matters can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict prevention”. We believe that this principle applies as much to the prospect of developing and deploying weapons for use in outer space, or against objects placed in outer space, as it does to other weapon systems.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

Like others, Ireland believes that greater transparency in space activities by States will be instructive with regard to government actions, intentions and capabilities. This can only assist in ensuring that some States do not react to perceived threats on the basis of worst-case assumptions that may only serve to hasten the arms race we all wish to avoid. For this reason, Ireland joins others in urging all space-faring States to consider the many useful transparency and other confidence-building measures that have been proposed here and elsewhere, including most recently by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission chaired by Dr. Hans Blix.

In particular we are attracted to suggestions that States should be encouraged to provide advance notice of all space launches; that States should declare unilaterally that they will not fight-test or deploy weapons in outer space; that they should declare moratoria on the production and testing of anti-satellite weapons that cause debris in orbit; and that active consideration should be given to establishing, by code of conduct or otherwise, a requirement to observe minimum exclusion zones around satellites in orbit and other space safety rules.

We believe that these measures would significantly enhance confidence among States in the continuing peaceful use of outer space to the benefit of all. We also believe that work by all of us on such ideas may serve to foster an environment of trust that will be conducive to the negotiation of a multilateral agreement on PAROS itself. For our part we stand ready to work with others at the CD and elsewhere on these important questions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you, Ambassador, for that statement and for your kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil, Ambassador Carlos Antonio da Rocha Paranhos. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. da ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil): Mr. President, I would like to start by congratulating you on taking the responsibility of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and I also would like to express the appreciation of the Brazilian Government for the efforts made by Russia in organizing, with proficiency, the ongoing debates on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

PAROS is a subject to which Brazil attaches great importance. In this sense, we favour the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of an ad hoc committee to deal with this issue. Such an ad hoc committee should be framed in accordance with the revised "A5 proposal".

We commend the working papers prepared by the delegations of China and the Russian Federation. These and other relevant suggestions and initiatives, including seminars organized by UNIDIR, highlight the need for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on this subject. We also thank the secretariat for the excellent compilation of documents which has been produced on this issue.

Since we are discussing confidence-building measures and transparency, and with a view to explaining our firm commitment to the principle that outer space should be maintained as the common heritage of mankind and free of weapons, allow me to say a few words about space activities and research in this field in Brazil.

(Mr. da Rocha Paranhos, Brazil)

Since the inception of its space research activities 40 years ago, Brazil has been firmly motivated by peaceful purposes and has oriented its initiatives towards applications that meet society's needs and demands.

Space research and exploration activities represent key areas of interest in Brazil in the light of the huge extent of its territory and coastline, its Amazonian forest, with sparsely populated areas, and the diversity of its climate. In particular, applications in the field of satellite remote sensing have proved to be of crucial importance to my country.

International cooperation has been a vital component in the planning and implementation of space activities in Brazil. The diversification of partnerships has led to bilateral cooperation programmes with Argentina, France, Germany, the United States, the European Space Agency, as well as with China, India, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

In 1994, the Brazilian Space Agency was established as a civilian authority within the direct purview of the Executive Office of the Presidency. The Brazilian Space Agency plays a central role in coordinating the major activities carried out by the institutions of the National System for the Development of Space Activities (SINDAE). This includes, among others, the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and is responsible for satellite development and related technologies, pursuing research and development in the field of space applications, earth observation and space and atmospheric sciences. The Institute of Aeronautics and Space is responsible for the development of Brazil's satellite launchers. It is also responsible for the development of the Alcântara Launching Centre, a fully operational commercial launching complex ideally located on the line of the Equator, in the northern state of Maranhão. The private sector and Brazilian universities and research institutes are also involved in space-related research and development projects and are contracted to develop and supply systems, equipment and services.

The National Policy on the Development of Space Activities establishes the major principles, objectives and guidelines for Brazilian space activities, namely: to develop in Brazil scientific and technological expertise in space activities, within the framework of the country's obligations under international agreements; to promote the development of space systems and related ground infrastructure that may provide data and services needed by the country; and to prepare Brazilian industry to participate and become competitive in the global market for space-related goods, services and applications.

The current Brazilian national space programme covers a 10-year period from 1998 to 2007. The programme consists of eight major initiatives: space applications, satellites and payloads, satellite-launching vehicles and sounding rockets, space infrastructure, space sciences, research and development on space technologies, training and development of human resources and support to the qualification of the national space industry.

The programme's activities have led, inter alia, to the development of data collection satellites by Brazilian engineers. Since 1988, Brazil and China, in the context of a bilateral space research programme, have been collaborating on a programme to develop remote sensing satellites. The first China-Brazil earth resources satellite, called CBERS-1, launched in 1999,

(Mr. da Rocha Paranhos, Brazil)

represented a significant step in terms of South-South cooperation in the production of satellites designed for global coverage using optical and infrared cameras. After the completion of the original project, which covered research and bilateral development of two satellites, Brazil and China have now agreed to develop two second-generation satellites, CBERS-3 and 4.

In addition, SACI, a micro-satellite launched in 1999 carrying four experiments conceived by Brazilian scientists and foreign partners, is providing useful information, and other small scientific satellites are expected to be launched in the short and medium term.

Furthermore, two earth observation satellites, projected to operate in equatorial circular orbit at an altitude of 900 kilometres, are now under development in Brazil.

My delegation is of the view that research for peaceful purposes in outer space is in the common interest of the progress of mankind. Outer space should be kept free of weapons. The establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space would constitute, in our view, an important element in a balanced programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the praise extended by the Government of Brazil for Russia's efforts in preparing for and organizing debates in the Conference on Disarmament on the problem of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Mikaël Griffon. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. GRIFFON (France) (translated from French): This statement should have been delivered by our Chargé d'affaires, Mr. Jean-Michel Despax, but he had to leave for another commitment, so I will make the statement on his behalf.

Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time during your term, allow me first of all to congratulate you on taking the Chair and assure you of my delegation's loyal support. We are happy that we have an opportunity this week to go into greater depth on one of the issues of particular importance to the Conference on Disarmament. This session follows the previous sessions of the focused structured thematic debate as agreed on jointly at the start of the year by the six Presidents. In particular it forms part of the follow-up to the session on consideration of the issue of a future treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

As Ambassador Petritsch of Austria stressed in his general statement on behalf of the member States of the European Union, human activities increasingly depend on space facilities both in the economic and scientific areas, and in the implementation of national security policies. The European Union's position tallies well with the approach adopted by my country, which has taken an active part in the work on this subject since the beginning of the 1980s in our forum. Since the beginning of this discussion France has displayed its support for the peaceful use of

(Mr. Griffon, France)

outer space. For France this remains a fundamental issue in international security. In June 2001 the President of the French Republic stated that “the non-militarization of space is a fundamental element. It has been upheld to date despite all the temptations of the cold war. It should be maintained. It would be in nobody’s interest to open this new Pandora’s box. No one could preserve a monopoly in this area. The result would be a new arms race with disastrous consequences for everybody”. This stance still guides the French approach. From it stem three basic principles: free access for all to space for peaceful uses, preserving the safety and inviolability of satellites in orbit, and the need to take account of the legitimate defence interests of States.

In the Conference on Disarmament, the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space is addressed in connection with other topics of a different character. We believe that this is in many ways an artificial situation. We have certainly seen major efforts on the part of China and Russia to adopt a more flexible position on how the Conference on Disarmament might be given a role in this area. We remain convinced that the issue of PAROS, like others indeed, should be considered independently of the other subjects with which we are engaged.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you for your statement and your kind words addressed to the Chair. I would now like to make a statement on behalf of the Russian delegation. My statement will be somewhat abridged as compared with the text that has been officially circulated among delegations.

Wide-ranging international cooperation in the exploration of outer space builds mutual trust between States and helps to enhance cooperation among them in all areas of international activity. However, the prevailing climate of cooperation in outer space may be under threat. At previous meetings much has been said about the fact that we are witnessing the emergence of a potential danger that weapons will be placed in outer space. This is why the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use or threat of force is an urgent task. In our view, the most effective way to address this issue is to prepare a new treaty which would fill the existing gaps in international outer space law. Transparency and confidence-building measures could be an integral part of such a treaty, as they would help in establishing baseline data, verifying compliance with the treaty provisions and strengthening coordination and cooperation in the process of its implementation. Proposals along these lines, albeit in a very general form, are contained in document CD/1679 prepared by Russia and China.

At the same time, we recognize that transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities are valuable per se as a possible route towards strengthening outer space security. During discussions on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament between 2003 and 2005, some delegations noted that work on confidence-building measures as a simple first step can bring all States together and help in securing consensus on matters relating to PAROS. It is hard to disagree with this stance.

(The President)

These considerations have prompted a closer look at the issue of TCBMs. I would like to say from the very outset that working on the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space does not in any way signal a slackening of our focus on the task of drawing up a new treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects. Drafting such a treaty has been and remains Russia's priority in the context of outer space security.

It should be pointed out that the application of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities is nothing new. For quite some time TCBMs have been recognized as a significant element of the international legal dimension of such activities. Specifically, in the resolution it adopts each year on PAROS, the United Nations General Assembly recognizes that concrete proposals on confidence-building measures could form an integral part of an international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space.

In one way or another transparency and confidence-building measures have already been incorporated in a number of international agreements on outer space. They contain provision for such matters as informing the United Nations Secretary-General as well as the general public and the international scientific community of the nature, conduct and outcome of activities in outer space, providing data on launched space objects as well as space objects that are no longer in orbit or have changed their earlier reported orbits, cooperating in the joint management of emerging problems, etc. TCBMs play a standard-setting role in the field of missile non-proliferation in the form of annual statements on the main policy orientations regarding space launch vehicles, the annual provision of information on the numbers and classes of launched space launch vehicles, invitations extended to international observers to visit launch pads, as well as preliminary notifications of space launch vehicle launches and test flights.

Recently interest in TCBMs has grown noticeably. A number of TCBMs are now being implemented by States at their own initiative. For instance, since 2003 Russia has been using the Internet to inform the international community of forthcoming launches of spacecraft and their missions. In 2004 Russia made a pledge not to be the first to place weapons of any kind in outer space. This initiative was supported by member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We call upon all States to follow suit.

Norway provides notifications of planned launches of probes into the upper layers of the atmosphere from a launch site in the Arctic Ocean. India and Pakistan have an agreement on advance notifications of missile launches. An important statement was made by Great Britain at a plenary meeting on 8 June 2006 when it indicated that it had no plans to deploy weapons in space.

At the same time, these measures as they stand today are not comprehensive either in terms of coverage of the variety of space activities or in terms of participation by States in their implementation. This situation was one of the reasons which prompted Russia to submit a draft resolution at the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", which was adopted by an overwhelming majority. In the resolution Member States are invited to inform the

(The President)

Secretary-General before the sixty-first session of their views on the advisability of further developing international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We share the view of the Ambassador of Italy that our debate and our discussion of this subject this year at the Conference on Disarmament may prove useful in the preparation of appropriate information by Member States.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in and of themselves minimize the risk of arriving at an erroneous perception and assessment of another State's military activities. They contribute to the prevention of military confrontation, the application of the principle of non-use of force or the threat of force, and the promotion of regional and global stability. The development of mechanisms to ensure predictability in military activities by States in outer space on the basis of TCBMs would objectively contribute to reducing the chances of the emergence of unexpected military threats in and from outer space. It would allay uncertainties regarding the strategic situation in outer space and would consequently reduce the need to prepare in advance to neutralize such threats.

Transparency and confidence-building measures are no substitute for arms limitation and disarmament measures, nor can they replace verification measures. They may, however, facilitate work on disarmament commitments as well as measures of verification. The development of TCBMs does not undermine work on the treaty on the non-placement of weapons in outer space or divert attention from it, but on the contrary bolsters it.

It should be borne in mind that developing verification measures for the new treaty is no easy task. It might be preferable to draft the treaty in the first place without verification measures, which can be devised at a later stage. TCBMs could for a certain period of time compensate for the lack of verification measures in the new treaty, all the more so as the aim is to reaffirm the non-placement of weapons in outer space, which is free of any such weapons so far. TCBMs would enhance the confidence of the parties to the treaty that the commitments set out in it will be fulfilled.

TCBMs may be formulated and applied by States either individually, bilaterally or multilaterally. They may be voluntary or, if it is judged to be necessary, they may be legally binding. There is no doubt that the multilateral nature of TCBMs substantially enhances their practical significance.

For the purpose of updating our ideas about TCBMs, we think it is desirable to draw on the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts between 1990 and 1993. Their report is a source of many ideas which are still relevant today. Interesting proposals concerning TCBMs have been put forward by Canada, France and a number of other States, and interesting points have also been made today.

(The President)

We would like to make a few comments on a TCBM package which we believe would be viable given today's conditions. This package of measures is not exhaustive, but could serve as a starting point for further discussions. Possible TCBMs can be subdivided into several categories: first, measures aimed at ensuring greater transparency in outer space programmes; second, measures aimed at expanding the amount of information available on spacecraft in orbit; and third, measures related to rules of conduct governing outer space activities. Such measures could be implemented in a variety of ways - exchanges of information, familiarization activities, notifications, consultations, thematic workshops, etc.

First of all, exchanges of information on the main directions of States' policies regarding outer space activities, on major programmes for research into and the use of outer space, and on the orbital parameters of space objects.

Second, familiarization activities comprising visits by specialists to space launch sites, flight command and control centres and other outer space infrastructure facilities, invitations to observers to attend launches of spacecraft, and demonstrations of rocket and space technologies.

Third, notifications of planned spacecraft launches; of scheduled spacecraft manoeuvres which may result in dangerous proximity to the spacecraft of other States; of the beginning of a descent from orbit of unguided outer space objects and their predicted impact areas on earth; of the return of guided spacecraft from orbit into the dense layers of the atmosphere; and of the return of spacecraft with a nuclear power source on board, in the event of malfunctioning and an apparent danger that radioactive materials may fall to earth.

Fourth, consultations to clarify information provided on programmes for research into and the use of outer space; on ambiguous situations as well as other areas of concern; and to discuss the implementation of agreed transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Fifth, thematic workshops on a variety of issues relating to research into and the use of outer space organized bilaterally or multilaterally with the participation of scientists, diplomats and military and technical experts.

Such measures could be incorporated into the new treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The above considerations were included in the recently issued Russian-Chinese working paper (CD/1778).

The development of TCBMs in outer space activities both in the Conference on Disarmament and within the United Nations may serve as an important consolidating factor in relation to outer space and lead to practical results in terms of building a responsible approach to the exploration and use of outer space and in terms of ensuring the safety of outer space activities.

I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Mr. John Mohanco. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. MOHANCO (United States of America): Mr. President, thank you for allowing me to speak at this occasion on a subject that is of great interest to us in the United States. I wanted to introduce myself first. I am the Deputy Director of the Office of Multinational Nuclear Security Affairs in the Bureau of International Security and Cooperation and Non-Proliferation in the State Department. My Assistant Secretary, Mr. Rademaker, was here a couple of weeks ago speaking to you, and I would like to follow up at this time on his topics and these others.

Our delegation has listened with interest to the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As with FMCT and other issues, we see that the CD, meeting in plenary session, can hold meaningful discussions, of both breadth and depth, on any topic of interest to its members. As Assistant Secretary Rademaker stated on 18 May, the United States supports discussion by the CD of both “traditional” and “new” issues with the aim of identifying any that might be ripe for more serious consideration.

After listening to these particular discussions, however, our delegation is more convinced than ever that issues relating to the supposed weaponization of space definitely do not command consensus in this body. Let us see why.

The United States was one of the principal movers behind the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which we continue fully to support. This important treaty has served the international community well for nearly four decades. During that time, human beings have travelled to the moon, and learned to function continuously aboard space stations. China has recently joined Russia and the United States in conducting manned space flights, and citizens from over a dozen countries have flown in space. The use of space-based remote-sensing and communications satellites has increased exponentially, making valuable contributions to both international security and economic well-being. Space-based navigation and timing has become a standard for activities that range from time-critical emergency rescue to enabling the automatic payment of gasoline purchases. All in all, the principles of the Outer Space Treaty - including free and unhindered access to space by all nations - have been critical to these successes.

It is worth noting that these developments have happened, at least in part, because of the freedom to conduct defence-related activities in space, so long as those activities are consistent with the principles of the Outer Space Treaty. None of the great developments in space would have occurred without the driving requirements of national security; certainly, the great boon of satellite-based navigation and timing never would have been pursued if military space activities had been banned. The States party to the Outer Space Treaty have demonstrated that the peaceful use of space is completely consistent with military activity in space. Threats to the peaceful use of space, like threats to the peaceful use of the oceans or of the atmosphere, come not from the existence of military hardware, but from those who would disturb the peace, no matter the environment.

Our delegation has reviewed carefully the paper on transparency and confidence-building measures that China and Russia have put forward as CD/1778. There is nothing inherently wrong with exploring new confidence-building measures, but the CD is not the appropriate venue for such discussions. The practices of the space community evolve as our individual capabilities

(Mr. Mohanco, United States)

improve, and discussions among States on how to manage those practices are appropriate. Such discussions, however, do not constitute a valid reason for proposing new arms control measures for outer space.

CD/1778 notes that the existing Outer Space Treaty, together with the Liability and Registration Conventions, already allows for confidence-building measures, including the possibility of observing launches, plus consultations regarding the possibility that given activities in outer space could interfere with other space activities. As an example, CD/1778 discusses the possibility of notifications regarding scheduled spacecraft manoeuvres which may result in dangerous proximity to the spacecraft of other States. The Outer Space Treaty calls for appropriate international consultations before proceeding with an activity which could cause potentially harmful interference with the activities of other States; a spacecraft-to-spacecraft collision would be an example of such harmful interference. As CD/1778 makes clear, it is impossible to create a universal and comprehensive model of transparency and confidence-building measures. The current structure of voluntary consultation measures in the existing instruments regarding the use of outer space allows the application of appropriate measures on a case-by-case basis.

Some argue that the present outer space regime is insufficient in that it only addresses stationing weapons of mass destruction in space, and not weapons of any type. The United States and other countries represented in this body have looked frequently at the possibility of banning anti-satellite weapons or other space-related weapon systems, but we always find that such a ban is impossible to define in a way that excludes practical and important uses of space-related systems. Many proponents of additional measures apparently assume that it is easy to identify what is or is not a weapon in outer space. This certainly is not the case, as anything in outer space with the ability to alter its trajectory could be a weapon. This includes any of the current meteorological, communications, remote-sensing, or navigation satellites currently in orbit. Any of these could, in principle, have its orbit altered so as to collide with another satellite, with obviously harmful results to the target.

Also, any space-based object with sufficient fuel can be de-orbited to strike the earth. Delegations no doubt remember the concern occasioned when Skylab de-orbited, when the Kosmos satellite crashed in Canada, and the care taken with the de-orbiting of the Mir space station. Indeed, any large object in orbit, whatever its peaceful purpose, can cause great harm by falling from orbit. We have merely to look at the impact crater in Arizona, the mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous era, or the 1908 event at Tunguska to see the damage that simple rocks and balls of ice can cause when they fall from orbit.

The question of definition - of the inherently dual-use potential of any space object - is a basic barrier to any attempt even to discuss bans on space weapons in any meaningful way. Delegations nonetheless could spend a great deal of time speculating about the kinds of exotic outer space weapons that might be developed years, or even centuries, from now. However, this would place us in the same position as the fictional scientist who, dissatisfied with the fact that dragons do not exist, devoted a year of study to the topic and determined that there were three types of dragons, each of which failed to exist in an entirely different manner.

(Mr. Mohanco, United States)

Let us be clear about the intent of much of this speculation. Many proponents of a ban on space weaponry argue that, unless such weapons are banned soon, some government - usually identified, scurrilously, as the United States - somehow will begin an arms race in outer space. History demonstrates, however, that this is hardly a reasonable speculation. Some countries have gone so far as to test anti-satellite weapons in space over a period of several years, while others have conducted surface-based research which could be used for anti-satellite missions. Notice, however, that such research has not created a push for deploying weapons in space, nor has it generated the feared arms race in space. For our part, the United States does not have any weapons in space, nor do we have plans to build such weapons.

On the other hand, the high value of space systems - for commerce and in support of military operations - long has led the United States to study the potential of space-related weapons to protect our satellites from potential future attacks, whether from the surface or from other spacecraft. As long as the potential for such attacks remains, our Government will continue to consider the possible role that space-related weapons may play in protecting those assets.

The United States remains committed to the peaceful exploration and use of space by all nations for peaceful purposes. "Peaceful purposes" includes appropriate defence activities in pursuit of national security and other goals.

We take seriously our commitment to carry on all United States activities in the exploration and use of outer space in accordance with international law, including the Outer Space Treaty, which incorporates by reference the Charter of the United Nations, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation and understanding. It is in our interest that other States take their commitments in this regard seriously as well. Our Government has, far and away, the lion's share of assets in outer space. Thus, we have the most to risk from activities that could harmfully interfere with this significant outer space infrastructure.

The cold war is over, and there is no arms race in outer space. Thus, there is no - repeat, no - problem in outer space for arms control to solve. On the contrary, there is unprecedented international cooperation in civil and commercial space activities, including among former cold war adversaries. There already exists an extensive and comprehensive system for limiting certain uses of outer space, and the existing multilateral outer space regime already adequately deals with the issue.

Given these incontrovertible truths, our delegation reiterates its call on this Conference to provide early agreement on the draft mandate contained in CD/1776 to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the next logical step for this forum. As demonstrated by today's debate, delegations may continue to use this plenary to conduct in-depth reviews of all issues of interest to member States, including outer space, and we welcome continuing exchanges of views on all issues.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of the United States of America for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Mr. Valle Fonrouge.

Mr. VALLE FONROUGE (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as my delegation is taking the floor for the first time since you took the Chair, allow me to congratulate you on that as well as on the way in which you have organized our work to discuss issues related to PAROS.

Argentina considers confidence-building measures to be one of the cornerstones of stability and security in outer space. If these measures are applied with the same enthusiasm and on the same scale as on the European continent, they could be extremely useful in preventing a possible arms race in space.

Briefly, I wanted to say on this occasion that we support the setting up of a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to study general principles, confidence-building measures and the establishment of a regime capable of preventing the militarization of outer space. We believe, in this respect, that the mandates on PAROS set out in the five Ambassadors' proposal and in the informal "food for thought" paper circulated by Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands provide a good basis for dealing with this issue. They also offer a mandate for initiating negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

For Argentina, it is essential that any proposal whose purpose is to fill legal vacuums should not hinder the exercise of the inalienable right to use outer space for peaceful purposes, including access to space as a form of national socio-economic development. I must note in this connection that Argentina has been engaged in an ongoing transparent and predictable process of implementing a civilian national space plan entitled "Argentina in space 1997-2008", which has been administered by the National Commission for Space Activities since its establishment in 1991.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Mr. Lars Höstbeck.

Mr. HÖSTBECK (Sweden): We have presented Sweden's general views on the importance of preventing weaponization of outer space in the plenary on 8 June, and further elaborated on the scope and basic definitions of a possible future treaty in the informal plenary of 9 June. Today we will address the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space.

As we made clear last week, Sweden favours the negotiation of a clear-cut prohibition of the weaponization of outer space. Such a treaty would probably take many years to negotiate, once such negotiations could begin. The discussions last week on the technical and legal aspects of such a treaty proved that much work remains before we can reach a common understanding on the parameters of a possible treaty. And we all know that the political consensus to initiate real negotiations in the CD on this issue unfortunately does not exist today.

(Mr. Höstbeck, Sweden)

It is in this light that we very much welcome the general approach of the Russian/Chinese working paper CD/1778 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. Confidence-building measures in outer space are not a new concept. A lot of work on this issue has been done within the framework of the United Nations, and several existing international agreements incorporate important CBM provisions. In fact, an important step would be the full implementation of all existing CBMs, for example those included in the 1975 Registration Convention.

In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly refocused the interest of the international community on this issue by adopting resolution 60/66. In this resolution United Nations Member States are invited to give their views on the advisability of further developing international transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. For Sweden, the short answer to the question posed is a clear yes.

The work on further CBMs in outer space could be carried forward in several forums, within the United Nations and its committees, including the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Space, as well as in the context of the CD. Such processes should, however, be mutually reinforcing and coordinated in order to avoid duplication or contradictory approaches.

Any future treaty on the non-weaponization of outer space would need to include CBM provisions. But the discussions on CBMs should not necessarily be viewed as a precursor to the elaboration of a future treaty. Agreement on recommendations of further CBMs would most certainly enhance mutual trust in outer space activities and favour common understandings of the risks involved in the weaponization of space, but they would also in themselves serve important purposes.

As pointed out in working paper CD/1778, the unilateral or joint commitment by States not to place weapons and to prevent an arms race in outer space would probably be the most important such confidence-building measure.

Mr. President, allow me to comment further on some of the concrete TCBMs that are mentioned in working paper CD/1778 and in the statement you made.

In the paper TCBMs are categorized as measures aimed at enhancing transparency in outer space programmes, transparency on outer space objects in orbits, or measures related to the rules of conduct during outer space activities. A fourth such category could, in my view, be bilateral or multilateral cooperative outer space projects, including common space-related infrastructure.

As regards exchange of information, we see no major obstacles to the steps proposed. The exchange of information on programmes related to military activities would probably need to be mainly qualitative in nature, with less emphasis on the quantitative aspects. Exchange of information on commercial space programmes would of course have to take into account the need to preserve key business interests.

(Mr. Höstbeck, Sweden)

Demonstrations, such as voluntary but systematic invitations for experts to launch sites, etc., would be a significant contribution to transparency and confidence-building.

The ideas put forward on further elaboration of notification schemes, as well as the full implementation of such existing agreements, have in principle our support. However, some of the concepts need further elaboration. For instance, the concept of “manoeuvres that may result in dangerous proximity” is open to various interpretations and would need further discussion.

Mechanisms for consultations would serve many essential purposes, as pointed out in the working paper. One simple measure to facilitate such consultations would be the appointment of national points of contact.

Thematic workshops would certainly contribute towards building relations and understanding between individual scientists and experts, but may not significantly affect the level of confidence between States.

In conclusion, Sweden is ready to participate in the discussions in the relevant forums on further CBMs in outer-space-related activities. We welcome such a pragmatic step-by-step approach to enhancing space security, and we hope that this approach will contribute to furthering our deliberations on outer space issues also in the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you for your statement. The list of speakers has now been completed. I would like to ask if there are any other delegations who wish to speak. I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. MACLACHLAN (Australia): Mr. President, I wish to make something of a public service announcement, but before I do, I should like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and welcome the energy that you - and may I say the P6 and indeed the secretariat - are bringing to both this debate and other thematic debates that we are having in this CD session. It really underscores that we are all capable of making much better use of our time in this forum.

I asked for the floor merely just to inform colleagues that the Australian Mission will be hosting a seminar in this chamber on Friday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The seminar is to deal with the important issue of MANPADS proliferation, and indeed the secretariat is circulating an agenda for that seminar.

Before concluding, I should just like to invite all delegations to that seminar. You will see from the programme that we have a large number of experts coming to present on a range of technical and also policy issues.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): Thank you for the information and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other delegations wishing to speak? Thank you. The Secretary-General of our Conference, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, would like to make an announcement.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): As you know, we have been discussing the question of the possibility of the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressing the Conference on Disarmament. According to the preliminary information that I have, the Secretary-General will be here in Geneva next week to open the Council on Human Rights and for some other activities. He plans to use Wednesday, 21 June, at about 11 a.m., for his statement before the Conference. Of course, this is preliminary information for you in order to be ready for a possible meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on Wednesday. I hope to confirm the information later this week when I will be getting an official letter from the Secretary-General.

If the Conference on Disarmament would like to convene on Wednesday, the Secretary-General can be here, because on the other days he has a full programme, specifically, Monday and Tuesday, and he will only be here for three days. So it is actually up to the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank you for that very important information, and I would like to reaffirm that I, as President, also have similar information as to the arrival of the Secretary-General and his possible participation in the work of the Conference. However, this information awaits final official confirmation, and we will hope that everything will happen as described by Sergei Ordzhonikidze. I hope that the delegations to the Conference will have no objection if we hold an unscheduled meeting to hear the statement of the Secretary-General tentatively on Wednesday, 21 June, at 11 a.m.

As for our other business, the next plenary meeting will be held on 20 June 2006 at 10 a.m. The speakers will include high-level representatives, including ministers. I would ask you to bear that in mind. On 14 June, we will have an open-ended informal meeting to discuss three issues: ways to assure safety of outer space assets, the way ahead on PAROS in the CD and elsewhere, and any other business. This meeting will be open only to member States and observer States, as well as representatives of UNIDIR. On Thursday, 15 June 2006, at 10 a.m., we will have our meeting which was originally planned to be informal, but in accordance with a request from the Ambassador of Japan, who would like to make a statement at a plenary meeting, with your consent we will start our meeting with a formal plenary during which the Ambassador of Japan will make a statement. If any other delegations wish to do the same, we will offer them an opportunity to do so. Then we will have a short break and resume our work in an informal plenary meeting, which will be devoted to the issue of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. I would like to thank you for the good work and adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.