

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

My Government has expressed the hope that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a matter of some urgency. Today, it has become apparent that there is an overriding necessity to arrest the process of militarization of outer space from assuming irreversible proportions. The first step in this direction should be to discontinue any existing programme to nuclearize outer space militarily. It is regrettable that the consideration of this matter by the Conference has met with apparently insurmountable difficulties, especially in reaching an understanding over the framework of the mandate of the ad hoc Committee on the item. This impasse only postpones any chance of reaching acceptable and binding legal instruments that would ensure that outer space is preserved as the common heritage of mankind and not another arena of military competition. It is the view of my delegation that although the super-Powers bear a special responsibility with regard to the demilitarization of outer space, the subject remains a collective and a multilateral one on which States share the responsibility to take appropriate measures in this direction.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The international community voted most convincingly in favour of General Assembly resolution 39/59, which aims at the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This mirrors the growing awareness that the militarization of outer space must be precluded if the risk of a nuclear war is to be reduced. However, there are attempts to make this Conference and the world believe that it is necessary to carry the arms race to outer space in order to reduce the risk of a nuclear war. We regard this as utterly misleading.

Like the Secretary-General of the United Nations and representatives of many States, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to address this issue simultaneously with the talks between the Soviet Union and the United States, and to deal with substantive matters, and not to get distracted by discussions on peripheral problems. Anyone who has set his sights on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons does not need new expensive and destabilizing space weaponry. What it takes is the political willingness to arrive at accords with the other side to prevent an arms race in outer space and to stop it on earth.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

Notwithstanding the far-reaching scope of this goal, announced in the Soviet-United States statement of 8 January 1985 here in Geneva, we believe that it is necessary -- as an expression of the desire to reach appropriate agreements -- to halt immediately the production and deployment of new nuclear weapons and to refrain from any action aimed at the militarization of outer space. To continue to deploy nuclear weapons and stockpile new means of mass destruction under the cover of negotiations would, in fact, be tantamount to an attempt to appease public opinion in order to continue the policy of armament.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

We also support the proposals for the establishment of subsidiary bodies with a view to beginning negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Under the present circumstances, to begin multilateral negotiations on these questions in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, represents a true and unavoidable test of credibility.

(Mr. Lechuga Hevia, Cuba)

Every day we are witnesses to the fact that the arms race is constantly being spurred on anew, thus absorbing vast resources. The most widely mentioned, and latest, example is the United States programme for the militarization of outer space, which has been rejected by the majority of the international community as well as by eminent sectors within the United States itself, because it opens a dark chapter in the policy of seeking military superiority and negotiating from a position of strength.

Billions of dollars spent on this and other projects will further add to the spiral of senseless expenditures in a world in which millions of human beings are dying for lack of food or proper medical care, and this must be repeated over and over again, because this poignant reality cannot be left out of the great debate of our time.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The question of preventing an arms race in outer space is one in which the relationship between bilateral negotiations between the two Great Powers and our work within this Conference is most sharply focused. Australia wants to see agreements concluded which will ensure that there is no arms race in space. We acknowledge the particular interest and responsibility of the two Great Powers in this context, but we are certain that the global nature of the problem involved and the need for all States to be engaged in this great objective means, assuredly, that the Conference on Disarmament has a role to play.

If the Conference does not become actively engaged in the issue of preventing an arms race in space, the prospect of viable agreements being reached will be diminished. This in turn may effect the possibility of bilateral agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union being arrived at.

My delegation will work positively with others in seeking to establish a subsidiary body of the Conference, with a relevant programme of work, which will engage the multilateral community in fostering agreements to ensure that there is no arms confrontation, no arms race in space. We must take care in this work to ensure that, while it proceeds, stability in the strategic balance is maintained. We have no doubt that if that balance were to be disturbed, the possibility of reaching the agreements that we all want with regard to outer space, would be greatly threatened; and, specifically, it will be important for us to recognize in our work on space the important contribution which reconnaissance, early warning and communications satellites make to strategic stability.



(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

Another urgent matter which is closely linked with nuclear disarmament is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The extension of the super-Power rivalry from the land, sea and airspace into outer space poses a new threat to mankind. The peoples of the world call for an immediate halt to the arms race in outer space and for its demilitarization, so that outer space can be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind. We are now at a critical juncture for stopping the arms race in outer space. It is not yet too late for the world community to make immediate efforts to reverse this dangerous trend. If we do not act right now, and allow space weapons to be developed unchecked, the consequences will be too dreadful to contemplate.

During the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, great efforts were made by many delegations for the demilitarization of outer space. The resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (A/39/59), sponsored jointly by 16 countries, headed by Sri Lanka and Egypt and including China, was unanimously adopted with only one abstention. This is a significant achievement scored at the last session of the General Assembly, which testifies to the grave concern of the countries of the world over the dangerous development in outer space. The resolution calls upon all States, those with major space capabilities in particular, to take immediate measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. It calls on our Conference to establish, as soon as possible, an ad hoc committee, with a view to undertaking negotiations and urges the USSR and the United States to advise the Conference regularly of the progress of their bilateral negotiations.

In view of the complexities of the issue and in order to facilitate the negotiations, the Chinese delegation has proposed that our efforts be focused first of all on ensuring the elimination of all weapons from outer space, in other words, banning the research, testing, development, production, deployment and use of all outer space weapons, including anti-satellite and anti-ballistic missile weapons, and destroying all such existing weapons systems.

As is the case in other areas of disarmament, the super-Powers that possess far greater military capabilities than other countries logically also bear special responsibilities for the cessation of the arms race in outer space. We hope that both in the bilateral and multilateral negotiations, they will show a sense of responsibility towards humanity, and make constructive efforts to ensure that the outer space be freed from an arms race and used only for peaceful purposes.