

(Mr. El Reedy, Egypt)

Another positive factor which should not be overlooked when evaluating the work of this session is the outstandingly diligent approach which has characterized the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons. Under the capable chairmanship of Ambassador Sujka of Poland, this Group was able to devise a practical method which had a direct effect in furthering the progress of its work. The way in which the contact groups dealt with the various elements of a draft treaty on the full and effective prohibition of the production, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stocks of such weapons was both positive and fruitful. We hope that, at the next session of the Committee, the Group will be able to build on its achievements during this session and that it will be successful in reaching agreement on a specific text and provisions for the various articles of the draft treaty.

I would now like to turn to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a matter which, after extensive debates during the spring session, we agreed to include on our agenda. At that time I explained Egypt's position in this respect and emphasized the fact that, since the beginning of the second half of this century, in the General Assembly of the United Nations and, in particular, in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Egypt had continually advocated the need for an agreement to prohibit the use of outer space for military purposes and to restrict its use to peaceful purposes in furtherance of the interests and progress of mankind. Although agreement was reached in 1967 on the "Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies", 15 years after the adoption of that Treaty we still lack an international agreement prohibiting the arms race in outer space and restricting its use to peaceful purposes.

The rapid progress in modern technology and the space sciences calls for an early approach to this item through an ad hoc working group endowed with a general, comprehensive and non-specific mandate within the framework of which it would be able to address all aspects of the problem, including the question of anti-satellite systems.

We are naturally aware of the complexities and ramifications of this question. During the first part of this session last spring, therefore, we proposed that the secretariat should prepare a full collection of all the background documents and proposals relating to this question so that we could identify the various stages through which it has passed. This would undoubtedly save much time and effort which would otherwise be spent in the informal consultations which have been proposed to deal with this question.

At the conclusion of the work of our session we note that, in spite of all the efforts made, there are some issues which have not been addressed. I am referring in particular to the question of guarantees of the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and the question of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. The discussions and consultations that will be taking place during the coming session of the General Assembly may be able to remove some of the obstacles impeding agreement on these two questions.

Possibly no single item on the agenda of the international community has been the subject of greater endeavours than that of disarmament. Hence, the feeling of frustration is felt most keenly by those whose work relates to disarmament questions,