

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

Last year, the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space for the first time, and considerations of a general and substantive nature were made on the question. We feel that much useful work in identifying problems related to present activities in outer space was accomplished. However, the discussions were far from conclusive, and we consider it important that they should be further developed.

Outer space is also an important topic at the United States-Soviet Union bilateral talks, and it would be unrealistic to proceed with multilateral discussions without paying due attention to the developments at the bilateral level. Further, we need to define more clearly what we mean when we talk of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. For one thing, definitions and roles of various space objects have become very complicated. This fact, taken together with the reality that the information available for our work is extremely limited, requires us to ask the United States and the Soviet Union to keep the Conference on Disarmament appropriately informed as to the state of the bilateral negotiations and the problems that they are facing, so that we shall be able to give full consideration to those areas which could be suitable for a multilateral approach and take action early in this session to agree on specific questions to be discussed. In drawing up a programme of work for this year, we believe it necessary to reflect on the discussions which took place last year. Further, we think that the documents and papers presented by the representatives of Canada and the United Kingdom and by the secretariat all provide useful material for advancing our work.

As a result of efforts by many countries, we were able to reach agreement on a single resolution on outer space at the General Assembly last year. My country strongly hopes that the spirit of co-operation shown there will make possible the early establishment of an ad hoc committee on this subject and that we will be able to commence substantive work on questions to be taken up at our multilateral forum.

(Mr. Jessel, France)

Prevention of an arms race in outer space is an item to which France attaches particular importance. The 1985 session was the occasion of the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee which, unfortunately, was able to conduct substantive work for only a few weeks. However, thanks to the skilful chairmanship of the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Al-Farargy, the Committee was able in that brief period of time to hold a highly interesting preliminary debate, which should lead us to re-establish this ad hoc committee this year as soon as possible.

The mandate adopted last year is far from exhausted. In my opinion a similar mandate should be adopted immediately, so that the Committee can continue the exchanges of viewpoint begun last year, on the legal régime of space and its omissions, the technical aspects of the question, and various