

(Mr. Ekéus, Sweden)

A number of partial measures to control or constrain ASAT developments have been discussed. They range from registration and information on relevant activities to arrangements to prevent incidents and restrictions on the testing and deployment of specific, dedicated ASAT systems. Substantive consideration of those proposals can also hopefully serve to bring about a common understanding on the role of various types of satellite for international security, and on desirable approaches to avoid the deployment of ASAT weapons.

The implementation of even limited measures to check such a development could be of major significance. Any measure restricting the possibility of carrying out an ASAT mission in a reliable way may reduce crisis instability, and thus benefit international security.

On several occasions my delegation has made it clear that the Conference on Disarmament would benefit from the contribution of scientific expertise on space technology. Scientific and technological development in outer space activities is dynamic. Our work is suffering from a lack of up-to-date information on such developments. The deliberations in the Ad hoc Committee would be greatly facilitated if it became possible to obtain a jointly shared perception of basic elements in space technology and development that is of relevance for the work of the Conference. The Outer Space Workshop in Montreal, Canada, in May this year was an effective demonstration of the usefulness of a scientific presentation of the state of the art relating to outer space techniques.

With these considerations and experiences in mind, my delegation would deem it an important step if the Conference could consider the possibility of organizing a meeting of scientific or technical experts on space issues during its 1988 session, preferably during the first part of the session. During such a meeting, which should be of ad hoc character and of limited duration (one to two weeks), definitions and verification techniques relevant to anti-satellite weapons and anti-satellite warfare could be addressed. Furthermore, trends and long-term prospects regarding the possible or potential weaponization of space could be addressed. Deepened knowledge and expanded overviews would make the delegations better equipped to advance the work of the Ad hoc Committee in a serious and constructive way.