

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

members of the Conference on Disarmament will refuse to include such a paragraph. A declaration to that end could well constitute the point of departure for more specific and binding initiatives in future with appropriate verification measures.

In dealing with item 2 of the programme of work of the Ad hoc Committee, which concerns the legal disarmament régime which has been established in the sphere of disarmament by the multilateral treaties in force, we had occasion to witness an interesting exchange of views that has, in our opinion, clarified several aspects of the matter. Firstly, it is an accepted fact that this legal régime establishes that celestial bodies can be used for exclusively peaceful purposes and that, moreover, that régime excludes the military use of celestial bodies as well as the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and also of other weapons which are neither nuclear nor weapons of mass destruction. As regards outer space, it is accepted that it cannot be the subject of testing or deployment of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. It is also accepted that it is not permitted to place nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction in Earth orbit. Regrettably, there is no agreement on the multilateral legal régime governing outer space with respect to the testing and deployment of weapons that are neither nuclear weapons nor weapons of mass destruction.

We must say that it worries us to hear from time to time that the legal régime for outer space should draw on that for the high seas. We believe, on the contrary, that this item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament which has as its purpose the prevention of an arms race in outer space corresponds to a basic goal, which is to avoid the legal régime for outer space resembling in any way the régime for the high seas. We believe that, were we to establish a régime for outer space similar to that for the high seas, we would have failed completely in our aim of preventing an arms race in outer space. It is enough to observe the situation obtaining on seas and oceans permanently criss-crossed by military fleets equipped with all types of weapons to conclude that there could be no more deplorable picture of outer space than to conceive of it traversed by space objects of an offensive and defensive military nature such as those that travel the high seas. The phenomenon that characterizes the navel arms race must not be reproduced in space.

The Ad hoc Committee has now begun its deliberations on the third item on its programme of work, which concerns proposals and future initiatives for preventing an arms race in outer space. It is obvious that, to prevent an arms race in outer space, the first measure that must be taken is to avoid the deployment of weapons, and that requires both a binding commitment in that sense and the adoption of verification systems that will ensure compliance with that commitment. The Conference on Disarmament is giving proof within the context of other items that it is possible to draw up complex verification procedures when there is the political will necessary to reconcile the goals of disarmament with those of national security and industrial and commercial secrecy. Why should it not be possible to establish a binding régime for the registration of objects launched into space? That is very simple to do given political will. Regrettably, the space Powers wish to reserve a wide measure of freedom of action for themselves in the military use of outer space and