

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

This is an area which, if we walk away from it, the judgement of the international community will be harsh indeed. So it has been no small thing that we have agreed again to re-establish a committee on this subject. There have been disputes about its mandate, but the fundamental reality, in our view, is that this Conference must have a committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. And we have one.

We think that the committee should work in terms of certain basic realities. The first of these is that space is now widely utilized for a variety of purposes, including a considerable number of military purposes. Secondly, there is an existing legal régime to regulate activities in space. But thirdly, the situation is not static. Indeed, it is dynamic in the extreme.

It involves technological development within existing or known space systems. It involves new programmes, programmes of research such as those that are being carried out, inter alia, by both the United States and the Soviet Union. And it involves expansion of the field, including the entry into space of new States that did not previously work in or have objects in space.

The consequence of this is that we need to analyse these changes. We need to identify any gaps that now exist or may be opening up in the existing legal régime so that, on the basis of that analysis and the identification of those gaps or requirements, we can point towards improvements.

And this we certainly believe is a subject of fitting and necessary multilateral concern. For example, we can look at the question of what are the desirable or tolerated uses of satellites. We can look at the question of where new research will lead, including research that is being conducted on

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