

20. With respect to existing agreements, multilateral as well as bilateral, relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the Group of Socialist delegations emphasized that there exists already an international legal régime which places certain limitations on various arms and military activities in outer space. In their view, however, all the agreements are not sufficient to put an effective barrier against the extension of the arms race into space, as they leave open certain channels, such as the development and deployment in outer space of weapons or systems of weapons not defined as weapons of mass destruction, or the deployment of certain weapons-systems to be used against objects in space, or used from space against objects on Earth. They have concluded, therefore that concrete measures are needed urgently to prevent such developments as they would entail dangerously destabilizing consequences.

21. Some delegations answered that there already exists a substantial body of law - both customary and treaty law - that is applicable to activities in space. Adherence to this body of law provides assurance that outer space will only be used for peaceful purposes.

22. With respect to the legal régime applicable to outer space, it was stressed that, as affirmed in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, activities in the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. In this connection, some delegations noted the relevance of the provisions of Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter concerning the non-use of force.

23. Some delegations considered that those provisions constituted a central element of the legal régime in outer space. They noted that the prohibition of the use of force was subject to Article 51 of the Charter, which recognizes the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence in case of armed attack. They expressed the view that Article 2 (4) of the Charter already afforded protection to space objects and that, therefore, this should be taken into account when considering the need for additional measures for the protection of satellites against the use of force.

24. Other delegations, while recognizing the importance of the general principle on the non-use of force, as laid down in the United Nations Charter, noted that it did not preclude the militarization of outer space, as evidenced by the conclusion of international agreements specifically relating to outer space,