

Mr. CAMPORA (Argentina)

The Argentine delegation has put its name on the list for today's plenary meeting in order to refer to agenda item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Ad hoc Committee is doing the job it was mandated to do. Its deliberations are moving ahead gradually under the chairmanship of Ambassador Pugliese, whose competence in the field is certainly up to the measure of the antecedents of Italy, a country that has been a forerunner in studies and research aimed at establishing a régime for the exploration and peaceful use of outer space. The Ad hoc Committee has already completed deliberations on the first and second items of its programme of work, which, as we know, concern respectively issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race and the legal régime established in the area of disarmament by the treaties in force.

One of the issues of greatest interest which emerged in dealing with the first item was that of determining whether outer space is currently free from the deployment of weapons. The space Powers, which are few in number, have not provided a clear-cut reply, declaring, for instance, that they have not deployed weapons permanently in outer space. We believe that the international community would be truly relieved to hear that so far there are no weapons deployed in outer space. In our view, the means to be used to inform public opinion of that situation, that is, that no weapons have been placed permanently in outer space could well be the report that the Conference on Disarmament submits to the General Assembly. It would be sufficient in that respect for the Ad hoc Committee to include a paragraph stating that none of the member States represented in the Conference on Disarmament has permanently deployed weapons in outer space. That assertion avoids the complex issue of defining what a space weapon is, since what is sought is a simple statement to the effect that the member States represented in the Conference on Disarmament have not deployed weapons of any nature or kind. It is simply a matter of asserting that there have been no weapons deployed. It would then be enough, as we have said, for such an assertion to appear in the report of the Conference on Disarmament, and we hope that none of the States