

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Last year's General Assembly once again requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and to re-establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose.

The discussions in particular on the legal aspects of the weaponization of space which have taken place in the Ad hoc Committee during the last few years have been useful. They have made it clear that there is a need for additional legal measures in order to prevent an arms race in space effectively. It is an important task for the Conference on Disarmament to contribute to the development of international law in this regard.

Many general ideas have been put forward concerning outer space issues. However, to achieve progress one must go from generalities to specifics. It is regrettable that some delegations have shown so little interest in discussing concrete proposals.

To carry out its work the Ad hoc Committee will require information about relevant space activities. All States which have space programmes should therefore provide the Conference with information about their activities in this field. The major space Powers have a special responsibility to do so, and should take the lead.

My Government has on several occasions stated the need for the global prohibition of anti-satellite weapons. Such a ban would directly benefit the increasing number of States launching civilian satellites, and contribute to international security.

The de facto moratorium on testing of anti-satellite weapons should facilitate further progress in this field. As a first step, the CD could consider the possibility of organizing a meeting of experts of limited duration to address, for example, definitions and verification techniques relevant to anti-satellite weapons.

Work to elaborate a draft treaty prohibiting radiological weapons did not advance last year.

The importance my country attaches to prohibition of the release of radioactive material through attacks on nuclear facilities is well known. Such a prohibition is, in our view, an indispensable part of a radiological weapons treaty. Thus I note with regret that so little was achieved in the Ad hoc Committee in 1987.