

conflicting positions with a view to promoting a commonly-shared understanding of what existing treaty law and customary principles of law say in terms of prohibition of certain activities in outer space. This exercise would also have to focus on the question to what extent, as far as space is concerned, there is a need to go beyond existing treaty law and broader norms regarding the use of force in general.

24. A number of delegations, while acknowledging the value of the restraints imposed by the existing legal régime, which placed some barriers to the arms race in outer space through limitations on certain weapons and military activities in that environment, reiterated that in some areas there were loopholes. They noted that the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, because of its limited scope, left open the possibility of the introduction of weapons in space, other than nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, in particular anti-satellite weapons and space-based anti-ballistic missile systems. Furthermore, in their opinion, current developments in space science and technology, coupled with on-going military space programmes, underscored the inadequacy of existing legal instruments to prevent an arms race in outer space. They, therefore, held that there was an urgent need to supplement and amplify the existing legal régime and that, consequently, it was imperative to strengthen, improve and broaden the legal régime applicable to outer space with a view to the effective prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Some other delegations stressed that as long as the analysis of the existing legal prescriptions remained restricted to the continuously repeating and deploring of deficiencies and lacunae without attempting to agree upon the real need for and adequate approach to the improvement and completion of a comprehensive legal régime, the work of the Committee would remain selective, deliberately incomplete and without substantial reward.

25. Some other delegations stressed that there was already a body of international law governing activities in outer space which provided a considerable measure of prohibition and protection. They believed it was important to have a full understanding of the scope of the existing legal régime, of the inter-relationship of its provisions and of aspects related to adherence, compliance and enforcement. Some of those delegations believed that the examination of that régime in the Ad Hoc Committee confirmed that there continued to be a need to arrive at a common understanding of what were permitted and prohibited uses of outer space.