

(Mr. Tornudd, Finland)

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is on the agenda of this Conference for the fifth year. Last year the Conference was able to start substantive, although rather preliminary, consideration of this question. We hope that conditions have matured enough to permit a fuller examination this year.

Finland sees resolution 40/87, adopted by near-consensus in the General Assembly, as incorporating the basic considerations that should apply to the use of outer space by all States. Existing international treaties with relevance to space activities must be upheld and rigorously enforced. International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space should be actively promoted.

The use of outer space for such military functions as early warning and verification is a fact. Satellite communications for these purposes serve to enhance strategic stability. While the use of satellites for these as well as purely civilian purposes continues to increase rapidly, there is no comprehensive legal framework covering, and indeed protecting, their use. A thorough consideration of this problem should receive high priority in the context of bilateral as well as multilateral talks on arms control in space. Resumption of bilateral United States-Soviet talks or multilateral negotiations within this Conference on banning anti-satellite weapons would be a most welcome development in this regard.

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

As we approach the work of the Conference for the 1986 session it is useful to take into account the recommendations of the General Assembly at its fortieth session. The overall thrust of the 66 resolutions adopted at the fortieth session was once again in favour of urgent and speedy action by the Conference on Disarmament in regard to the first three items of its agenda and the item on prevention of an arms race in outer space. Not to pay heed to these recommendations will only further erode the credibility of this organization. My delegation is fully aware of the complexity of the problems involved in tackling in a multilateral forum the question of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects but we are convinced that there is no other way to resolve them except by discussing them in a systematic manner and by negotiating our differences. We have accordingly been alarmed at being told at the early stages in the work of the Conference this year that the central issue of nuclear disarmament falls outside our purview.