

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

In a period of constant evolution and change in research and development relating to new weapons and weapon systems, the possibilities of innovation are unlimited. Clearly, no type of weapon and no field of application will require as much investment as the development and deployment of space weapons. The fact that these economic and technological efforts cannot be used in a spirit of solidarity to overcome the backwardness of a vast proportion of mankind is to be deplored.

Outer space has been militarized for more than 25 years. As the latest SIPRI yearbook states, since 1958 2,219 satellites which carry out real or potential military functions have been launched into space. This represents at least 75 per cent of all satellites in space. The high percentage of satellites with military uses highlights the fact that the super-Powers' space activities are integrated with their weapon systems on Earth and their strategies and doctrines associated with the use of nuclear weapons. It is also not out of place to recall that some nuclear weapon States have used satellites to support military operations against developing countries. Serious events of this kind highlight the interest of all countries, space-Powers and others, in achieving the rapid demilitarization of outer space. The circumstances should be borne in mind when considering a legal régime for the protection and use of satellites.

Together with the vast majority of countries making up the international community, Argentina has always maintained that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and that consequently it should be preserved for exclusively peaceful uses in order to promote the development of all nations and international co-operation.

Space, a new dimension in human enterprise, makes all peoples of the Earth profoundly aware of man's common destiny. More clearly than ever our planet is, in the universal city of the Cosmos, the sole home of all men whatever country they may inhabit. Consequently the use of outer space cannot be based on criteria linked with military doctrines which reflect the specific national security perceptions of the nuclear-weapon space Powers. Criteria of this kind foster the process of action and reaction which perpetuates the arms race between them. This is a problem which must be approached from a broader standpoint fully reflecting the concerns and interests of all States on Earth.