

its country, including existing treaties. It pointed out that one country possessed currently operational capabilities in this area and, for many years, had been conducting research into advanced technologies for strategic defence.

16. One delegation answered that its country had not been conducting research into advanced technologies for strategic defence.

17. Some delegations stressed that the ambiguities surrounding the existing legal régime could only be resolved or clarified in the process of elaboration of new agreements, as none other than States Parties to existing treaties had the competence to interpret those legal instruments. Those delegations believed that as far as the international community was concerned, the calling into question of the meaning of the terms in international instruments by States Parties themselves, placed these instruments in jeopardy. Therefore, these delegations emphasized that reference to ambiguities in existing legal instruments would be devoid of meaning and even have the effect of diverting attention if made outside the framework of negotiations of further agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space. In this context they expressed the need to engage in the preliminary task of clarifying ambiguities surrounding weaponization of outer space and the "state of art" in space weapons within the context of negotiation. In particular, the need to reach agreement on the meaning of such basic terms as "peaceful purposes", "militarization", or "weapons of mass destruction", especially since recent developments in weapon technology have blurred the traditionally accepted interpretation of those terms among the space powers.

18. All delegations welcomed the initiation of bilateral negotiations on space and nuclear arms and recognized their importance. At the same time, they stressed the importance of, and need for, a multilateral approach to issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

19. Many delegations considered that the two negotiating parties should bear constantly in mind that not only their national interests but also the vital interests of all the peoples of the world are at stake and, accordingly, should keep the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament duly informed of the progress of their negotiations, without prejudice to the progress of the negotiations. These delegations further believed that bilateral negotiations do not in any way diminish the urgent need to initiate multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.