

Mr. MEYER (German Democratic Republic): In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee takes up today item 7 — the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Therefore, I would like to dwell upon this question in the first part of my statement. Afterwards, I am going to touch upon some aspects of the work of the NTB Working Group.

There is no doubt that nuclear disarmament, including particularly a comprehensive test ban, is the item of highest priority this Committee has to deal with. At the same time we cannot leave out of sight developments in other fields which — if not prevented at an early stage — could have serious destabilizing and dangerous consequences for international security and the maintenance of peace in the future. Recent events prove that the militarization of outer space is becoming a reality. It is no longer a question of science fiction. It is also no secret that certain military planners regard outer space as the "battlefield of the future". Their programmes of super-armament in outer space have become part and parcel of their concept aimed at achieving military superiority.

Taking into account these dangerous developments, my country favours the prohibition of the deployment of any kinds of weapons in outer space. An appropriate international agreement would effectively curb an arms race in outer space and promote the peaceful uses of this area.

We were very much satisfied that this basic position was adhered to by almost all delegations at the recently concluded Conference, UNISPACE II.

As far as this Committee is concerned, my delegation is led by the following approach:

Firstly, the ban should be a comprehensive one. It should prohibit the deployment of any kinds of weapons in outer space. Thus, the ban would include the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons, but would not be limited to it. Focusing on anti-satellite weapons only would not exclude the extension of the arms race in outer space into other directions.

Secondly, following the request of the United Nations General Assembly contained in resolution 36/29, the Committee on Disarmament should embark on negotiations.

We regret that some States seem, up to now, not to be prepared to accept the negotiating role of the Committee concerning this item.