

With its imminent entry into force, the Outer Space Treaty will soon be an established and far-reaching fact. It ranks among the important achievements in the arms control sphere since the establishment of the United Nations.

I congratulate the States of Latin America and the Caribbean for reaching agreement to establish the first nuclear-free zone in an inhabited part of the world. This treaty will, I feel sure, lend impetus to the non-proliferation negotiations, which have now been intensified in Geneva and will be pursued in this Assembly.

Non-Proliferation Treaty

The conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty is vital, urgent and of paramount importance. I urge that this Assembly endorse the results of more than two years of effort so that a treaty can become a working reality in the very near future. The treaty may not be a measure of nuclear disarmament but it is a vital step towards nuclear arms control, in itself an important pre-requisite to ultimate nuclear and general disarmament. It will help to prevent a new nuclear arms race, greatly reduce the danger of nuclear war and contribute to conditions in which the nuclear powers can address themselves to the problem of reducing their nuclear arsenals. Far from perpetuating a nuclear weapons monopoly, the international forces generated by this treaty will bring pressure to bear on the nuclear powers themselves to undertake further measures of nuclear arms control.

We are confident that the treaty will not inhibit collective defence arrangements nor the civil nuclear programmes of non-nuclear signatories. On the contrary in our view the treaty will enhance nuclear development for peaceful purposes in non-nuclear states. However, we are firmly convinced that it should prohibit non-nuclear signatories from developing so-called peaceful nuclear explosive devices. There is no distinguishing between military and civil nuclear explosive technology, between the destructive power of a nuclear bomb and a nuclear excavating charge. A more permissive provision for peaceful nuclear explosions would in our view represent a fatal loophole by means of which non-nuclear states could acquire military technology. That is not to say that we should not expect the nuclear powers, perhaps in this Assembly, to give an explicit undertaking to extend nuclear explosive services on reasonable terms upon request once they become technically feasible.

We also believe that non-nuclear signatories should have some parallel assurances from the nuclear powers against nuclear blackmail and hope this Assembly will be