

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria)

The item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" remains high on the agenda of our Conference. Resolution 43/70 of the United Nations General Assembly reiterated once again that the Conference has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, and requested the Conference to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate with a view to undertaking such negotiations. We earnestly hope that this year the mandate of the ad hoc committee will be agreed upon expeditiously, which will enable the Conference to proceed with substantive consideration of the subject. The content of the "adequate" mandate referred to by the General Assembly is of course subject to different interpretations. In my understanding, intensive and fruitful work is possible and needed even under the present mandate. There are a lot of proposals and initiatives that should be further pursued within the ad hoc committee. Such issues as a moratorium and ban on ASAT weapons and guarantees of the immunity of space objects, the establishment of an international space inspectorate and other verification mechanisms are well identified and, in our opinion, ripe for practical solutions, given political will on the part of all member States. We also note with interest the proposals and ideas regarding the multilateralization of the ABM Treaty and the Soviet-American agreement on the notification of long-range ballistic missile launches, the strengthening of the 1975 registration Convention, and so on. It will be very useful if the authors of these proposals elaborate on their ideas in a more detailed manner.

The Bulgarian delegation will also favour the establishment of a group of experts to consider verification issues in the context of specific aspects of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The consideration of these and other issues would not, in our view, preclude the search for comprehensive

solutions of the type envisaged, for example, in USSR documents CD/476 and CD/274. My country's main objective remains unchanged - outer space must remain free from weapons of any kind. It is our conviction that the Conference could make a significant contribution towards the achievement of this objective.