

(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

By common consent the prevention of an arms race in outer space has become an urgent issue so as to ensure that another part of our Universe is not embroiled in the arms race we have been witnessing and is instead used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Sri Lanka delegation has been actively associated in the discussion of this item and we were glad once again to be associated with the delegation of Egypt in co-sponsoring resolution 40/87 which received an overwhelming vote of 151 votes for with none opposing as the only resolution on the subject in the General Assembly. Last year despite similar success at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly we delayed action here in the Conference until March when through the commendable efforts of Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela as President, we achieved agreement on a mandate in order to establish an Ad Hoc Committee. The Report of the Conference for 1986 concluded that our work had contributed to clarifying the complexity of a number of problems leading to a better understanding of positions. It also urged that substantive work on the agenda item should be continued in the 1986 session. "Substantive work" implies progress and not repetition. Resolution 40/87 in operative paragraph 9 contains clear and unambiguous guidance for our work in an Ad Hoc committee this year and the fact that 151 nations supported this must weigh with those who plead for realism. My delegation will speak at greater length on this item later in our session. At this point our main focus of attention is the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate for substantive work to be concluded.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

It is also our opinion that item 5, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, is at an extremely interesting stage. We believe that the ad hoc committee on this item can be re-established at an early date to continue analysing a vital field in relations between States. Drawing up the rules to prevent the militarization of outer space represents a new task which should necessarily begin with a description of the military activities which should be prohibited in order for outer space to be used for exclusively peaceful purposes.

We welcome the beginning of bilateral negotiations on this subject. but from our point of view a restricted circle cannot be a substitute for the multilateral treatment of an item which affects the security interests of all States.