

(Mr. Skinner, Canada)

I have noted that the Committee on Disarmament has a considerable wealth of experience to draw upon. First and foremost is our negotiating experience based upon other issues, and a good amount of useful work can be undertaken in preparation for substantive negotiations. For example, an inventory of background material relevant to outer space is essential. There are a number of treaties, both multilateral and bilateral, which have served to attempt to reserve the "use of outer space for peaceful purposes". In addition to the 1967 outer space Treaty there is the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty, certain aspects of SALT I and SALT II, the ABM Treaty and multilateral treaties such as the 1979 moon Treaty, all of which have a certain significance in this regard. A compendium of relevant portions of these and other aspects of space law, drawn up in a fashion similar to that used by the experts in United Nations document A/AC.206/14 on the implications of establishing an international satellite monitoring agency would, in our view, be useful indeed.

There is a considerable scope, in these preliminary stages, for dealing with other essential and basic matters such as definitions, for it must be recognized at the outset that if we are to proceed in this Committee we must do so on the basis of a common and understood language.

For this reason, and in this regard, I wish to table in this Committee a working paper on arms control in outer space which presents the issue in what we have sought to make a balanced and non-controversial manner. This working paper has been prepared in order to put forward under one cover some of the considerations in developing an approach for this Committee. You will see now that it appears in document CD/320 which has just been distributed. Among other things, the paper presents the dangers in attempting to categorize space systems in a rigid manner -- that is, some systems might lend themselves to categorization; most, however, have characteristics which, depending upon the situation, can be either stabilizing or destabilizing. You will notice, incidentally, as you go through this paper in the fourth paragraph from the end of CD/320, there is a reference to a table which, you will note, does not appear in the document. The reason for this is because of what I have just said. After a long consideration it was decided that it would serve no useful purpose to try to categorize systems at this stage. Therefore, I would ask that a correction be issued to remove that paragraph.

In any event, I hope this working paper will be useful to members and will serve as a basic presentation of some of the issues, thereby contributing to a measure of common understanding.

(Mr. Terrefe, Ethiopia)

Before concluding, let me touch very briefly upon the item inscribed on our agenda for today's plenary meeting, "prevention of an arms race in outer space", a subject with which we have to deal more fully in the future. The Ethiopian delegation believes that space technology should be used solely for peaceful purposes. Therefore, any military applications or any hostile use of space should be strictly prohibited by an international treaty or international agreements. Faced with rapid space technology and its frightening dimensions, our efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space will face greater difficulties the longer the realization of the objective of a demilitarized outer space is delayed by lack of a common approach. It is our earnest hope, therefore, that through the establishment of an ad hoc working group, concrete proposals can be pursued, developed and negotiated for a common approach to make outer space a lasting and peaceful heritage of mankind.