

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

the international legal régime governing the activities of States in outer space. Positions show a great divergence of views as far as the issue of outer space as a whole is concerned. Statements made at the plenary meetings or in the proceedings of the Committee, however, tend to converge on the necessity to provide protection for the satellites in orbit around the globe, that is to assure their immunity for the sake of their unimpeded functioning. Statements made on this issue have generally declared this wish, but delegations have not elaborated on the concrete ways and means of providing protection for satellites.

In our opinion, this could be an aspect to which the Committee on Outer Space should pay specific attention in its future work. Even during the remaining part of the present session the Committee might consider if its work could be focused on examining and perhaps outlining specific measures aimed at ensuring the unimpeded functioning of satellites. In this regard, I listened with great interest to the statement of His Excellency Leo Tindemans, referring to the possible steps in this field in connection with outer space. Concerning this question some important questions may arise which perhaps would merit serious in-depth consideration from the Committee.

Some of those questions are relatively easy to answer, for instance, the one whether all the parties concerned are interested in providing immunity to satellites. The answer, it seems to me, is an unequivocal yes. All States, irrespective of whether they possess or do not possess satellites, are vitally interested in the normal and safe functioning of satellites. It seems to me that there is widespread recognition that the world would run into chaos without them.

Some other issues are not so simple to answer, although positions show a convergence to a considerable degree. These questions are the following: Is the present international legal régime sufficient to guarantee beyond doubt the safe functioning of satellites in orbit, or are some further, appropriate multilateral legal measures required to provide the necessary guarantees? Should all satellites -- military and civilian -- enjoy adequate protection? Is it necessary and possible to make a distinction between civilian and military satellites, taking into account that none of them -- at least as of now -- is equipped with weapons? Do the satellites with military assignments perform functions vital enough for international security to make them eligible for protection? Should the problem of the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons be appropriately dealt with in this context? Can the existence of ASAT weapons be considered compatible with the aim of guaranteeing the normal functioning of satellites? Should the measures to be worked out be of a legally-binding character? Is it desirable that the measures to be worked out should be multilateral, with an appropriate adherence?

These are but some of the fundamental questions to be addressed by those taking part in the proceedings of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The expert of my delegation will elaborate on these questions in further detail in the forum of that Committee. I am sure that thorough consideration of such issues would give a concrete and useful direction to its proceedings.