

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

The re-establishment of the dialogue between the two biggest Powers -- which bear special responsibility for international peace and security -- has received a positive world-wide response. We are interpreting their position that "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and that neither side will "seek to achieve military superiority" as agreed norms of behaviour in the nuclear age which are of far-reaching importance. Their decision to accelerate their bilateral negotiations in regard to nuclear weapons is also viewed as a promising sign. We welcomed the fact that the proposals of both sides have become more specific, innovative and comprehensive. Yugoslavia considers important the initiative by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and the proposal to eliminate in three phases by the year 2000 all nuclear weapons on Earth and to renounce the spreading of the arms race into outer space, through appropriate verification measures -- proposals which also contain positions advocated by non-aligned countries for quite some time. No matter how important the dialogue may seem between the two super-Powers -- which bear the greatest responsibility for the maintenance of peace and upon which the survival of mankind depends -- the question of peace and security cannot be their sole province, as the problems relating to the security of all cannot be reduced to the security problems of a small number of countries. In the negotiations aimed at cessation of the arms race, arms reduction and disarmament, the two negotiating parties should bear constantly in mind that not only their national interests but also the vital interests of all peoples of the world are of stake. Therefore, their responsibility is not only towards their own countries, but also towards the international community at large. Consequently, they should keep the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as the Conference on Disarmament duly informed of their negotiations. These bilateral negotiations should not in any way diminish the urgent need to initiate or accelerate multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on all items, among which at present, in our view, the items on a nuclear-test ban, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on chemical weapons are of top priority. Both bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament have a role to play and should therefore facilitate, rather than hinder, each other.

The question of preventing an arms race in outer space is also a Conference priority. The Ad Hoc Committee on this item, established at the end of the 1985 session, was unable, in our opinion, to carry out the agreed programme of work. It is necessary, therefore, that it should start its work as soon as possible. The efforts of the Conference and of the Ad Hoc Committee must, at this stage, and as soon as possible, focus on finding the areas of agreement on how to prevent arms race in outer space. This should be done by taking into account the proposals submitted to the Conference by various delegations in the course of last year and this year. All countries -- no matter whether they have already stepped into outer space or not -- are vitally interested in using outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes and should prevent its further militarization. This is one more reason for the Conference to take an active part in the negotiating process leading to the adoption of urgent measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.