

(Mr. Skinner, Canada)

The second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, despite the disappointment many feel, may have had one positive benefit among others. It dispensed with illusion and stands as an object lesson of the necessity of working within the framework of what is possible. Already we see, at the summer session of this Committee, a renewed sense of realism, and this sense is as important for our deliberations in outer space as on any other issue which may appear before the Committee.

In this regard we should consider the effects of UNISPACE '82 recently concluded in Vienna. It is readily apparent that the mandate of the outer space Committee on peaceful use and the mandate of this Committee on arms control issues may be considered to have in some respects a mere mirror image aspect. I do not wish to deal at great length with the organizational aspects of arms control and disarmament; this is a matter which seems to be of endless fascination, not only to this Committee but elsewhere as well. We believe it would be better to move on to more substantive matters. Nevertheless, it is our view that the basic responsibility for preventing an arms race in outer space has been placed upon this Committee by the General Assembly. We should therefore take up our work in an energetic fashion. It is equally clear that there is a background in the outer space Committee discussions which will be of immense value here in the Committee on Disarmament: for example, the 1967 outer space Treaty is a product of the outer space Committee. As we build upon the outer space Treaty and other aspects of space law in developing the arms control treaty, which we all hope for, we must ensure that the experiences of the outer space Committee as well as of the CD, the CCD and the ENDC are fully utilized. We do not think, at this stage, that it would be productive to prolong discussion about whether or not to set up a working group on outer space if these discussions actually inhibit the Committee from addressing the substantive issues.

On 13 June, before the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament, Prime Minister Trudeau underscored the urgency of coming to grips with the development of new weaponry for use in outer space. He noted that 25 years ago, the first man-made satellite was launched. That event marked a leap in man's mastery of the natural environment. I have a note here on my paper, which is a term that Mr. Arthur Clarke used in this regard: he called it the last and greatest arena of human affairs.

Mr. Trudeau noted that 15 years ago it did not seem premature to close off the possibility that space might be used for other than peaceful purposes. He observed that today the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space is, in our view, patently inadequate.

The need, therefore, is clear and unequivocal.