

(Mr. Raúl Roa Kouri, Cuba)

Another question that deserves our attention and that was also examined by the summit Conference of the non-aligned is the extension of the arms race into outer space. The Heads of State or Government meeting at Harare expressed their deep concern at the preparations under way to extend the arms race into outer space and vigorously reaffirmed the principle that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes to the benefit of all countries, whatever their level of economic or scientific development, and be open to all States.

Consequently, they urged this Conference urgently to begin negotiations with a view to arriving at agreements to prevent the extension of the arms race, in all its aspects into outer space and to promote the possibility of co-operation in the sphere of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, while emphasizing the imperative need to halt the development of anti-satellite weapons, to dismantle existing arsenals, to prohibit the introduction of new weapons systems and to ensure that the treaties in force preserve outer space for peaceful purposes.

In taking stock of what happened last year in the sphere of disarmament, special mention must be made of the meeting that took place at Reykjavik on 11 and 12 October between the highest-ranking leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States, a meeting which came very close to achieving significant progress in arms reduction that, if they could continue going forward along those lines in bilateral or multilateral negotiations, would obviously have great importance for all mankind. The persistence of one of the parties, the United States, in continuing to develop what is termed the Strategic Defence Initiative to its ultimate consequences has prevented the realization of the agreements that had in principle been reached. That negative policy has earned the opprobrium of public opinion, which contrasts it with the willingness of the other party to give up nuclear weapons, to agree on a plan for their total elimination within a fixed time-frame, to propose guarantees for all as regards verification and, finally, to adopt effective measures to ensure the peaceful use and prevent the militarization of outer space before it is too late and the situation becomes irreversible.