

(Mr. Rodrigo, Sri Lanka)

We cannot, however, delude ourselves either as members of the CD or as members of the human race that all is well. The nuclear threat has not abated. Increasing sophistication and qualitative modifications have increased the magnitude and terror of that threat, fostering suspicion and instability instead of inspiring confidence and security. The reaches of outer space are threatened by man's ultimate pollution -- "weaponization". Economic problems abound while expenditure on arms moves up. As the distinguished Foreign Minister of Sweden said in his very important address this morning, the great problems of our time go far beyond East-West rivalry. They are global and often economic. Small countries are intimidated and threatened.

My own delegation has had a special interest in item 5 of our agenda. Resolution 41/53 adopted at the last General Assembly with virtual unanimity signals the concern of Member States to prevent an arms race in outer space and the desire to utilize the Ad hoc Committee of the CD towards this objective. That resolution also urged the United States and the Soviet Union to pursue intensively their bilateral negotiations in a constructive spirit aimed at reaching early agreement on preventing an arms race in outer space. Prevention now is better than seeking later, perhaps futilely, to limit, halt or control -- let alone eliminate -- an arms race in outer space.

Extension of the arms race into outer space would have adverse repercussions on current arms control agreements in other fields as well, leading to their weakening. Existing legal and other provisions to deal with the prospect of an arms race in outer space have been found wanting and in need of supplementing, particularly in the light of recent technological developments.

The benefits of the peaceful, rational and equitable exploitation of outer space are perhaps impossible yet to properly assess. However, we already have a more than clear assessment of the dangers perilously imminent in the creeping "weaponization" of outer space. Some 75 per cent of satellites in space are oriented towards military rather than development objectives. Calls for their protection should be examined in relation to the 1975 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer space. On-site