

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

agenda item 5. You will recall that last March the then President of the Conference established different contact groups to discuss the setting up of a number of subsidiary bodies and their mandate. With regard to item 5, the question of a mandate acceptable to all has been explored and discussed down to the last detail. A possibility of reaching a consensus emerged around a "non-paper" prepared in the course of consultations.

Many delegations considered this "non-paper" as an attempt worthy of consideration, as it might reconcile the various requirements. Bearing in mind the importance of the subject and the urgent need to consider the substance of the issue, the Western countries have wished to demonstrate **their flexibility** and, after serious reflection, accept the text of the "non-paper".

We have reproduced it in document CD/527, so that the results of our collective efforts should not be lost. We remain convinced that this text contains all the necessary elements to enable an ad hoc committee on agenda item 5 to undertake significant, even essential, work. The prospect of future negotiations is linked to the very role of the Conference, emphasized in the text of the first paragraph and reaffirmed in the reminder contained in the second paragraph. The exploratory work is a necessary first stage during which the ad hoc Committee will have to focus on the identification of issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, taking into account, as stated in the third paragraph, all existing agreements, existing proposals and future initiatives.

I should also like to recall that during the consultations the possibility was raised of accompanying the adoption of the draft mandate, if necessary, by an interpretative statement by the President of the Conference. The countries on behalf of which I have taken the floor also declared their willingness to give favourable consideration to such a possibility.

I am sure that we are joined by a common objective. We are seeking together the best way of attaining it. The distinguished representative of Algeria, when introducing document CD/329/Rev.2, stated at our last meeting that the establishment of an ad hoc committee with a suitable mandate was the best means available to the Conference to discharge its responsibilities with regard to this agenda item. We share that viewpoint. We have little time left to us before the end of the session. We should be realistic and use it at least to set up the structural framework for our work. I therefore venture on behalf of the co-sponsors to recommend that all delegations give favourable consideration to the proposal contained in document CD/527.