

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

In the field of activity of the Conference on Disarmament, the analysis of questions related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space is becoming increasingly important.

Here we have a repetition of the situation already described, arising out of the ambivalence of space technology, which can be used either for peaceful purposes or for military purposes.

Examination of space-related issues is giving us more and more knowledge as to how to differentiate between activities that will allow us to use outer space peacefully and those activities of a military nature that are also being developed by the so-called space Powers.

Gradual steps are being taken towards listing those activities which should be banned in any disarmament agreements in order to prevent an arms race in space.

This complex task of trying to delimit the scope of activities in order to prohibit those that would lead to an arms race in space should be carried out with the utmost care, so that it will not obstruct or encroach upon the peaceful use and exploration of space for the benefit of mankind.

Moreover, the prevention of an arms race in space should not be used as an excuse to limit international co-operation or to impose unjustified embargoes on the transfer and export of equipment connected with the exploration and peaceful use of outer space.

We have heard hints about a desire to create a régime for the non-proliferation of space weapons despite the fact that this Conference on Disarmament has not as yet managed to define what a space weapon is.

We are sure that economic interests, and in particular the economic return on space exploitation, are matters that a space Power or group of Powers may legitimately wish to keep for themselves.

Nevertheless, it would not be morally justifiable to attach conditions to international co-operation on disarmament grounds when dealing with situations or space programmes that are obviously peaceful ones.