

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

are therefore of a supplementary and mutually reinforcing nature, both designed to preserve the essential stabilizing function of satellites, and to minimize the occasions for conflict and misunderstanding.

I would finally like to approach an institutional issue. For good reasons it has been suggested that the protection of satellites would be exclusively a legal matter within the competence of the Legal Sub-Committee of the United Nations' Outer Space Committee. My delegation attributes a high priority to the Legal Sub-Committee and its work and we wish that this important body should continue its valuable activity. The problems on which I have touched would, however, only very partially lie in the Sub-Committee's competence. The Sub-Committee should certainly consider the protective aspects of civilian activities, -- for instance, collateral damage that might emanate from civilian satellites themselves, the reliability of indicated orbital data, the risks of re-entry and crash, and the consequences of such accidents in international and private international law. As regards the military relevance of the protection of satellites -- specifically in their military and stabilizing role -- there does not exist any alternative to the consideration of the subject matter in the Conference on Disarmament. However, the precise delineation between the competencies of these two bodies could only be made definite at a later stage when the identification of specific regulatory needs for the completion of the outer space legal régime has progressed and the military significance of each individual measure been sufficiently ascertained.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

Turning now to item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space, this is a question on which we have not yet advanced our work nearly as far as we have in the chemical weapons negotiations, namely the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have already made known our views in our statement of 4 February that we should reach agreement quickly on the renewal of last year's mandate. I do not propose to reiterate our views on that issue. I wish merely to announce that the Canadian delegation has given to the secretariat, for distribution to all delegations, a compendium of the 1985 documentation of the Conference on Disarmament on this subject. It is our view that an analysis of that documentation will make clear not only that we have already done considerable useful work in the Conference in elucidating the complexities raised by that question, but that considerable work remains to be done in analysing the legal régime and identifying any existing lacunae. Delegations need to address the issues embodied in the compendium. If some delegations disagree with some aspects of the Canadian or British working papers on the legal régime tabled during our last session, then let us hear from them, preferably in the form of working papers. This only underlines the importance as we see it of earliest possible agreement on a renewed mandate so we can devote our full efforts to concrete, substantive work. In the meantime, all of us should be preparing for such work.