

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

At its plenary meeting on 14 August the Conference on Disarmament accordingly took a decision on the mandate of an ad hoc committee to consider and negotiate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The drafts of the mandate are contained in document CD/329/Rev.2, submitted by the Group of 21, and in document CD/529, submitted by the group of socialist countries. The Conference found that there was no consensus on them, owing to the negative attitude adopted by the western countries. The socialist countries expressed their deep regret in that connection. They reaffirmed their readiness to continue to make constructive efforts, together with interested delegations, for the purpose of finding a successful solution to this problem concerning the organization of work.

As is generally known, the group of western countries did not insist that a decision should be taken on its own draft mandate contained in document CD/527. In our opinion, this in no way means that the question will continue to be considered here on the basis of that draft mandate. I should like to state definitely that the draft mandate proposed by the group of western countries, in its present form, is considered unacceptable to the socialist States. In view of the great urgency of the problem of preventing an arms race in outer space, the group of socialist countries continues to advocate that practical negotiations should be initiated without delay and that for this purpose an ad hoc committee with a clearly defined mandate should be established at the very beginning of the session which the Conference on Disarmament is due to hold in 1985.

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(Mr. Field, United States)

I had the sense that on our agenda item dealing with outer space we were very close this year to reaching agreement on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to undertake an in-depth review of all aspects of this broad and sensitive subject. It is on this issue, perhaps more than any other, that I have a personal feeling of regret that our Conference was not able to reach a consensus. I had looked forward with anticipation to joining in an investigation of the issues affecting the endless frontier of outer space, particularly the implications of existing international law. Let us hope that next year it will finally get under way.