

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

ABM systems are not the solution to security problems. This reality is reflected in the 1972 ABM Treaty, which prohibits the development, testing or deployment of systems, or components of systems, whether sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based, which are intended to counter strategic ballistic missiles. The Treaty itself recognized that "effective measures to limit anti-ballistic missile systems would be a substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms and would lead to a decrease in the risk of outbreak of war involving nuclear weapons". No prohibition, however, exists today as to other space weapons, such as ASAT-weapons.

There is a close link between development of ASAT-weapons and ABM systems. The construction of dual capacity weapons, which can be used both against satellites and ballistic missiles, is indeed feasible. Development and testing of ASAT-weapons could be used to circumvent the ABM Treaty.

It is encouraging that the Soviet Union and the United States have included prevention of an arms race in outer space in their forthcoming negotiations.

Development, testing and deployment of all space weapons must be banned and such a ban must totally prohibit ASAT weapons -- existing or planned -- and include the destruction of existing ones. Awaiting a treaty banning such weapons all States should refrain from testing, developing and deploying ASAT weapons. The use of ASAT weapons against another country's space craft is already forbidden in international law.

All countries, not only the super-Powers, have a stake in the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Conference on Disarmament should respond to the request by the General Assembly, and begin its work towards an international treaty or treaties banning all space weapons, including weapons directed against targets in space and from space to earth by setting up an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. My Government hopes and expects that both super-Powers will co-operate in this endeavour.