

(Mr. Dolgu, Romania)

We do not share this fatalistic outlook because our experience is in itself a reason for optimism. I am thinking of the fact that bacteriological weapons have been banned and we hope to succeed in banning chemical weapons and that most if not all States, and particularly the Soviet Union and the United States accept the idea that nuclear weapons should be banned. Why then should we not try and break the vicious circle of the arms race with all its sequel of extremely harmful consequences for peace, for growth and for development. Why should we not try to take a short cut by banning this new class of weapons -- space weapons -- before they are developed, before they jeopardize the security, indeed the very existence of each of our countries, before they swallow up vast resources which are so vitally needed today in order to carry out the transition to a new civilization, a civilization based on other technological foundations, on other consumption models, on other forms of behaviour in respect of the environment. Countries which have neither the means nor the ambition to become space Powers cannot remain indifferent to the absolutely catastrophic consequences of this new arms race. In our increasingly interdependent world, its effects will be felt by all peoples, whether large and powerful or small and weak.

The ongoing negotiations show how difficult it is to rid ourselves of chemical weapons and of nuclear weapons. Why leave our successors the difficult legacy of trying to rid themselves of these weapons which in a few decades will have turned the heavens into a real hell. It is infinitely easier, from the technical and political standpoint, to ban something that does not yet exist than something that does exist and is perceived as a threat. This is the very central idea which the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space should take as the basis for its work. This also applies to the entire concept of new weapons of mass destruction, including radiological weapons.

(continued)