

(Mr. Kosin, Yugoslavia)

Another area in which, in the present circumstances, we should live up to the mandate given to us relates to steps to raise the level at which nuclear disarmament issues are dealt with and to prevent an arms race in outer space. It is high time, indeed, that the Conference on Disarmament reasserted its role and responsibility as a negotiating forum. In this context the Conference should proceed to substantive work in dealing, first of all, with a nuclear weapon test ban. While we understand to some extent the possibilities of a step-by-step approach to this problem in bilateral talks, the ultimate goal must remain a multilateral treaty on a comprehensive test ban. The need for a CTB is universally recognized. No arguments can be accepted for falling short of this objective. It is a political question that cannot be evaded by technical justifications, as nowhere is verification so reliable as in this field.

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(Mr. Lechuga Hevia, Cuba)

There is another resolution of the General Assembly which refers to another crucial aspect of our work, the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We know that military programmes for outer space constitute a serious hindrance to disarmament agreements, a new threat for the future, for the survival of mankind. The Assembly declared itself "gravely concerned at the danger posed to all mankind by an arms race in outer space and, in particular, by the impending threat of the exacerbation of the current state of insecurity by developments that could further undermine international peace and security and retard the pursuit of general and complete disarmament".

That assertion cannot be gainsaid, and no subterfuge can conceal it. Outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, and should not be the arena for an arms race, as the same resolution states, and as is obvious. Hence, by majority agreement of the Assembly, this Conference has been requested to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. It is a challenge we cannot shirk, a duty we must fulfil as effectively and as practically as we can.