

the field of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, continues to be a valid initiative as experts and analysts concur in the conclusion that for the time being no weapons have been deployed in the space environment. The delegation, underscoring the political nature of such unilateral declarations, recalled that they have been recently agreed in the bilateral negotiations between the two major military Powers, to deal with very specific issue areas in which the complex nature of the elements to be verified make necessary the resort to manifestations of a political commitment in order to make progress.

55. Some delegations recognized the importance of verification in the context of measures to prevent an arms race in outer space and considered that it should be possible to assure verification of compliance with agreements through a combination of national technical means and international procedures. Other delegations noted that the Outer Space Treaty contained some verification provisions. A number of delegations were of the view that verification functions should be entrusted to an international body to provide the international community with an independent capability to verify compliance. Reference was made to the proposed international satellite monitoring agency and to international co-operation for the use of Earth monitoring satellites for the verification of arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

56. One delegation, in an expert presentation, analysed the different existing and possible ASAT systems. It noted that the efficiency of such systems depended on the speed of their operation, on their discretion, on their collateral effects and on the replacement capacity of the targets. It drew attention to the relationship between ASAT and ABM systems. It described possible ASAT techniques (fragmentation, kinetic or directed energy weapons) as well as the constraints which some of them would face (disturbances, need for accuracy, targeting, checking of results ...) It also envisaged possible passive and active counter-measures to ASAT systems. It stressed the difficulties in verifying a possible ban on ASAT weapons as well as in defining the scope of such a prohibition. It concluded that some technical financial or strategic constraints could dissuade ASAT deployments more than legal norms; co-operative measures such as a space code of conduct could however favour the conclusion of agreements in this field. In another expert presentation, the same delegation recalled its proposal for an International Trajectory Centre, designed as a management instrument for a confidence-building and transparency régime, which would collect data on space