

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

With respect to the item of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, even though we cannot really speak of concrete results, at least stimulating work has been done which enables us also to harbour a modicum of optimism. The Ad Hoc Committee dealing with the item has done work which my delegation considers both useful and positive. We should like to express our recognition to its Chairman, Ambassador Bayart, for the efficiency, devotion and impartiality with which he has led the work of the Committee.

In today's statement, we should like to make a number of comments on agenda item 5 in the light of the deliberations which have taken place, both in the plenary meetings as well as in the Ad Hoc Committee's meetings.

We wish to begin by highlighting, in connection with this item, the important contribution made by the delegation of Canada, with the presentation of a series of working papers where several very important aspects of the item are approached. The most recent of these documents, on terminology relating to arms control and outer space, is a meaty, soundly documented study and is therefore an invaluable working instrument for us. Further on in this statement, I shall refer to some of the questions dealt with in that document.

In our view, the debate held this year on the prevention of an arms race in outer space has helped to highlight a number of very interesting aspects of the task to be accomplished by the Conference on Disarmament, which I shall summarize.

Firstly, the need to spell out the meaning of certain terms and the scope of some of the concepts related to the item. In my previous statement on the item, I stressed the need to define more precisely the meaning of certain terms and the scope of certain concepts which we usually use during our deliberations. The Canadian document relating to terminology also highlights the importance of terminological precision in disarmament negotiations, and argues that certain terms should be defined. We agree therefore, with the Canadian document that the documentation of the Conference on Disarmament "reveals considerable imprecision in the use of terms relating to arms control and outer space", adding that "The tendency to use a number of terms loosely, if not corrected, could have a significant impact on the precision of language and upon the intent of statements, resolutions and treaties". The deliberations in the Ad Hoc Committee confirm these assessments and the need to achieve greater terminological precision.

Within this context, we consider that to make progress in the consideration of this item it is essential clearly to establish its scope. We need to spell out what we understand by the "prevention of an arms race in outer space". This is an idea on which there is not a uniform view in the Conference. To some, the prevention of an arms race in outer space means the demilitarization of space; to others, it means non-militarization of space; to yet others, it means the prohibition of the use of space for military purposes; and for some others, including my delegation, it means preventing the weaponization of space. These notions are apparently similar, but when carefully analysed they reveal fundamental differences which mean that the item is given a different approach and a different content in each case.

In our view, preventing an arms race in outer space consists in preventing the beginning of competition, between the Powers that have the technological capacity to do so, in the field of space armaments. Hence, it