

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

As already stated, the two major space Powers are at present the only countries that possess and are continuing the development of space weapons. They have naturally become the focus of attention of the international community. They ought to assume special responsibility for halting the arms race in outer space. If the two major space Powers truly have the political will to stop the arms race in outer space, they should adopt practical measures in undertaking not to develop, test or deploy space weapons, and on this basis conduct negotiations with a view to concluding as soon as possible an international agreement on the complete prohibition of space weapons. Resolution 41/53, on prevention of an arms race in outer space, which was adopted by the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, also "urges the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to pursue intensively their bilateral negotiations in the constructive spirit aimed at reaching early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space".

Since prevention of an arms race in outer space was placed on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, quite a number of delegations have advanced propositions and proposals on the subject, covering a wide range of elements relating to the issue. The Ad Hoc Committee on outer space may address these proposals in an orderly manner on the basis of a consensus view on their priorities to be determined according to their relevance to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Attention should be focused on the study and solution of the issues that are most directly related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. At present, there are already many proposals before us on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Some delegations suggest that an agreement on the prohibition of ASAT weapons should be reached first. Since ASEP weapons are the space weapons that exist at present, to start with their prohibition is of certain practical significance. The Chinese delegation, therefore, can go along with this proposal. However, I wish also to point out that the prohibition of other types of space weapons should by no means be ignored. These include the exotic ABM space weapons, such as directed energy weapons, kinetic weapons and other types of space weapons currently being developed by the two major space Powers. We should prohibit all kinds of space weapons.

Last year, in my statement on prevention of an arms race in outer space, I noted that the existing international agreements on outer space were reached under respective specific circumstances at the time of their conclusion. Therefore they all have certain limitations. With the development of space science and technology, especially due to the fact that the two super-Powers have been using new technologies to extend their arms race into outer space, These legal instruments, though of positive significance, no longer entirely suit the present needs and are not adequate for the prevention of an arms race in outer space in a fundamental way. In order to attain the ultimate goal of the "demilitarization of outer space", it is necessary to conduct negotiations on new international agreements, with the "non-weaponization" of outer space as the main objective at the present stage. If the arms race is to be prevented from extending into outer space, this work should no longer be delayed.