

18. Many delegations reiterated that outer space was the common heritage of mankind and as such should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes; thus making it of vital importance to prevent an arms race in outer space. They pointed out that to date the Conference had performed useful work in identifying and clarifying the various aspects of this complex item and had before it numerous proposals aimed at perfecting the existing legal régime. In their view, the Conference should urgently fulfil its role by elaborating new instruments of a legal character which would, in an all-embracing and multilateral way, tackle the issue of the non-militarization of outer space.

19. Some delegations belonging to the Group of Eastern European and other States reiterated that the issues of prevention of an arms race in outer space by joint efforts of all members of international community had a key meaning for international security and for strengthening of strategic stability. They considered necessary to provide on this track of disarmament a fruitful combination of multilateral and bilateral approaches. In their view, at the present time, the Conference on Disarmament was the most appropriate forum for arrangements to keep outer space free from weapons.

20. One delegation of the Western Group, having recalled the interpretation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty according to which that instrument did not prohibit all military activities in space, stated that some stabilizing military activities deserved to remain authorized. Besides, it was sometimes impossible to distinguish some civil activities from military ones. Therefore, it was preferable to concentrate on the prevention of any aggressive use of space. Moreover, that delegation stressed the difficulties of a comprehensive prohibition of antisatellite weapons as such, since any space objects and ballistic missiles, as well as many ground-based systems, had potential antisatellite capabilities.

21. One delegation of the Group of 21 pointed out that "peaceful" could not be equated with non-aggressive and it could only be interpreted to exclude "military uses".

22. One delegation belonging to the Western Group said that the role of the Ad Hoc Committee and that of UNCOPUOS were separate and distinct. If the Ad Hoc Committee was to make any progress the same delegation suggested that two areas merited further study: definition and verification. A glossary of terms and definitions would provide the Committee with a more solid foundation for its discussions. Equally no arms control agreement in space could hope to be sustainable without effective verification.