

(Mr. Yu Mengjia, China)

But the development of outer space science and technology has also raised questions causing us concern and apprehensions. The tendency to start an arms race in outer space between the Superpowers has become obvious. Credence is given by the Superpowers to the concept that "whoever controls the universe can control the earth". They have engaged themselves in active research on and the utilization of outer space and the development of outer space weapons. The Soviet Union started its development of anti-satellite weapons more than 10 years ago, and up to now, it has already conducted dozens of experiments. The United States is reportedly also taking effective measures to intensify its research activities and plans the deployment of anti-satellite weapons in outer space. Various indications point to the fact that the development of outer space weapons constitutes an integral part of the global strategy of the USSR and the United States. These two countries are competing with each other to extend the arms race to outer space, thus increasing the danger of war. This has already caused widespread anxiety among peace-loving people throughout the world. At the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held recently in Vienna, numerous countries urged the Superpowers immediately to cease activities leading to an arms race in outer space and expressed the hope that the Committee on Disarmament would adopt effective measures to this end as soon as possible.

China has all along held that outer space is the common environment of mankind and that space technology represents a great achievement in the development of science and technology. All countries should explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes and refrain from turning it into a new arena of the arms race. We agree with the views of the majority of the member States that the Committee on Disarmament should establish a working group as soon as possible so as to adopt all practicable measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. As is known to all, at present there exists a huge gap between States in space science and technology, especially in regard to their military application, and only the United States and the Soviet Union have the necessary conditions for it. Therefore, in the prevention of an arms race in outer space, they have unshirkable special responsibilities.

With regard to the mandate of the proposed working group, we are of the view that it should be authorized to consider and negotiate on the issue of the complete prohibition of outer space weapons. The future legal instrument on the prohibition of an arms race in outer space should be comprehensive. It should ban all outer space weapons, including anti-satellite weapons, and it should not only prohibit the deployment of weapons in outer space but also the testing, production and use of any type of outer space weapons because the mere prohibition of the deployment of weapons in outer space would leave leeway for the testing and use of weapons in outer space and in consequence the complete prevention of an arms race in outer space would not be achieved. Some States have proposed that the question of the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons be discussed first. As a practical step, this proposal seems to deserve our exploration.