

(Mr. Bojilov, Bulgaria)

The delegations of the Group of Socialist States hold the view that at present item 5 on the agenda of the Conference, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", is acquiring ever greater urgency. Our aim is to achieve a strict and universal ban on the deployment of weapons of any kind in outer space.

To the credit of the socialist States are such major proposals as the draft treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space, the draft treaty prohibiting the use of force in outer space or from space against the Earth, and the "Main provisions of a treaty on the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons and on ways to ensure the immunity of space objects" (CD/777). Our delegations have repeatedly reaffirmed their readiness to seek agreement on partial measures as well.

The delegations of the Group of Socialist States, as convinced supporters of effective international monitoring of compliance with arms limitation and disarmament agreements, consider that monitoring plays an especially important role in preventing an arms race in outer space. This is the intention behind the Soviet Union's proposal that consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing a system of international monitoring of the ban on stationing weapons of any kind in outer space, which would provide for the establishment of an international inspectorate.

The Conference has also built up a valuable stock of ideas and proposals tabled by other delegations, which might serve as a good basis for specific negotiations designed to prevent the transfer of the arms race into outer space. All these initiatives and proposals offer convincing evidence of the need to move the work of the Ad hoc Committee on item 5 of the agenda onto a practical track. Without exaggeration it may be said that at its 1986 session the Ad hoc Committee had already defined the problems related to preventing the transfer of the arms race to outer space, considered and identified the prohibitions and limitations deriving from existing international agreements, and also highlighted the loopholes in the legal régime governing outer space. We consider, and we are not alone in this conviction, that the future activity of the Ad hoc Committee must be directed towards the substantive and thorough study of existing proposals and initiatives to prevent an arms race in outer space. The work of the Ad hoc Committee on Outer Space should be directed towards the future, not the past.