

irreversible competition in the field of space weaponry which would have dangerous consequences for international peace and security, give the arms race a qualitatively new dimension, undermine existing agreements and jeopardize the disarmament process as a whole. It would also, in their opinion, create obstacles to the peaceful uses of outer space to promote scientific, economic and social development. They suggested that legal norms as a general rule should not be allowed to lag far behind the relevant technological developments and that, since this general rule is more valid with respect to space law, this necessitated strengthening the outer space legal régime. They, therefore, were of the view that as a result of the work carried out in previous years, attention should be devoted to proposals for measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. They believed that the various ideas and suggestions that had been advanced provided sufficient points of convergence to move forward in that area. Accordingly, many delegations held that the Ad Hoc Committee should proceed with a more structured and goal-oriented examination of the subject.

13. The Group of Socialist States considered that the commitment to the pursuit of peace made it necessary to end an arms race on the Earth and to prevent it from spilling over into outer space. They recalled that resolution 43/70 of the United Nations General Assembly had reiterated once again that "the Conference has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects" and had requested the Conference to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee "with an adequate mandate" with a view to undertaking such negotiations. With the content of the "adequate mandate" referred to by the General Assembly being subject to different interpretations, in the view of this group, intensive and fruitful work was possible and needed even under the present mandate, since the Committee had accumulated a lot of proposals and initiatives that should be further pursued. Such issues as a moratorium and a ban on ASAT weapons and guarantees of the immunity of space objects, the establishment of an international space inspectorate and other verification mechanisms, were well identified and ripe for practical solutions given political will on the part of all member States. They also favoured the establishment of a group of experts to consider various aspects of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The consideration of these and other issues would not, in their view, preclude the search for comprehensive solutions of the type envisaged in documents