

(Mr. Franceschi, Italy)

multilaterally and other ones that should instead be the subject of bilateral negotiations. This distinction is particularly important as it signals the determination of the General Assembly to facilitate as far as possible the bilateral talks of Geneva.

I should like to recall, in this regard, that the Soviet-American agreement of 8 January provided for the opening of negotiations on space and nuclear arms with all these questions to be considered and solved in their interrelationship. The transfer of negotiations on those issues from the bilateral forum to another forum could seriously undermine the very basis of the Geneva talks thus also creating obstacles to the nuclear disarmament process.

The Italian Government wholeheartedly supports the goal proclaimed both by the United States Administration and by the Government of the USSR of a world free of nuclear, offensive weapons. It seems to us that these proclamations strengthen the prospects of general and complete disarmament which should be implemented in a context of stability and peace and which should include a peaceful use of space to the benefit of all mankind.

The Conference on Disarmament has a primary role to play and immense work to accomplish for the achievement of such goals and, in particular, it will have a wide range of activities to perform in dealing with questions concerning space. The more so since technological progress and scientific research constitute a reality which is in constant evolution and has a tremendous bearing on the problems of disarmament and security. Our main task in Geneva should especially be aimed at working out co-operative approaches and at conducting a timely consideration of the many aspects involved, so as to lay the ground for a clearer understanding and for a gradual solution of difficulties. We think that given the time which lies ahead before research programmes currently under way yield concrete results we shall have the chance to accomplish very useful work, if we do not indulge in procedural wranglings.

The Conference still has to decide whether to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee and to confirm its previous mandate. The purpose of the remarks which follow is to assess some work which still remains to be done under such a mandate and to provide some conceptual guidelines for a discussion of issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the Ad Hoc Committee, also in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/87 of 12 December 1985.

The Conference on Disarmament exercises its responsibilities in an independent way in accordance with paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, resolution 40/87, in spite of reservations expressed by a number of countries on paragraphs 5 and 9, contains a number of elements which are relevant to the definition of a conceptual approach to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and which therefore deserves to be carefully examined.

Paragraph 1 of resolution 40/87 reads: "Recalls the obligation of all States to refrain from the threat or use of force in their space activities". The text of this paragraph is related to the discussions which were held last year, in the Ad Hoc Committee, whose programme of work included, as mentioned above, consideration of existing agreements relevant to the prevention of an