

(Ms Theorin, Sweden)

Sweden is gratified that discussions have taken place in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space during the past two years. That Committee's deliberations have, to a degree, been useful in sorting out issues in this field. The existing body of international law relating to an arms race in space is in many respects inadequate. We must negotiate additional measures, for example, a ban on space weapons, including development, testing and deployment of ASAT systems and their destruction. Existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral ones, must be strictly adhered to. The ABM Treaty is a case in point. The Ad Hoc Committee should continue its work during this year's session. Its considerations can be further broadened and deepened within the framework of its mandate. There are still a variety of legal aspects that should be further analysed. An overview of the technical aspect of space weapon development is called for. The setting up of an informal working group of technical experts could be considered.

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The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is scheduled to take place in 1988. Sweden will take an active part in that special session, as well as in the important preparatory work preceding it. The special session should reconfirm the conviction of the international community that there is no task more urgent for mankind than to achieve nuclear disarmament. Bearing in mind the priority of the nuclear issue, the scope could be broadened. For our part, we would be pleased if the special session also addressed such crucial questions as conventional disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the naval arms race and the need for confidence-building measures on a global level.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

I turn now to outer space. On the question of a convention of an arms race in outer space, the position of the Australian Government is clear: such an arms race should never take place. We accept that it is the basic commitment of the major Powers involved to prevent an arms race in outer space. That is what they have said, and we accept it and we want to see that commitment honoured. We believe that the multilateral community, whose interest in this issue is beyond question, can make an important contribution towards achieving this goal. We believe that the work of this Conference has a central place in this effort and should be resumed this year without delay. It would be distressing in the extreme if the resumption of that work were to be delayed by mere procedural arguments. The task is urgent and the job at hand is large. We hope, Mr. President, that the Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space will be well into its working stride before you leave the Chair of this Conference.