

(Mr. Kiilu, Kenya)

My Government has expressed the hope that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a matter of some urgency. Today, it has become apparent that there is an overriding necessity to arrest the process of militarization of outer space from assuming irreversible proportions. The first step in this direction should be to discontinue any existing programme to nuclearize outer space militarily. It is regrettable that the consideration of this matter by the Conference has met with apparently insurmountable difficulties, especially in reaching an understanding over the framework of the mandate of the ad hoc Committee on the item. This impasse only postpones any chance of reaching acceptable and binding legal instruments that would ensure that outer space is preserved as the common heritage of mankind and not another arena of military competition. It is the view of my delegation that although the super-Powers bear a special responsibility with regard to the demilitarization of outer space, the subject remains a collective and a multilateral one on which States share the responsibility to take appropriate measures in this direction.

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(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The international community voted most convincingly in favour of General Assembly resolution 39/59, which aims at the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This mirrors the growing awareness that the militarization of outer space must be precluded if the risk of a nuclear war is to be reduced. However, there are attempts to make this Conference and the world believe that it is necessary to carry the arms race to outer space in order to reduce the risk of a nuclear war. We regard this as utterly misleading.

Like the Secretary-General of the United Nations and representatives of many States, we call on the Conference on Disarmament to address this issue simultaneously with the talks between the Soviet Union and the United States, and to deal with substantive matters, and not to get distracted by discussions on peripheral problems. Anyone who has set his sights on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons does not need new expensive and destabilizing space weaponry. What it takes is the political willingness to arrive at accords with the other side to prevent an arms race in outer space and to stop it on earth.