

Mr. Beesley (Canada)

CD PLENARY

Thank you Mr. President, I shall be speaking very briefly this morning, merely to make an announcement of an essentially procedural nature on the outer space issue.

Before doing so, however, I should like to express my pleasure at your assumption of our Presidency and compliment you on your truly excellent opening statement. May I also say again, what a pleasure it was to serve under the distinguished presidency of our colleague Ambassador Bagbeni of Zaire.

We also have heard today an inspiring, statesmanlike, and, in every sense, outstanding address from the distinguished Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, on which I would not presume to comment, except to say that he has given us much food for thought on both nuclear and conventional arms control - and arms sale, particularly his references to the non-proliferation treaty. It crossed my mind as he was speaking that had we had an instrument in place, analogous to the non-proliferation treaty, relating to conventional weapons, we might be in a much better position today. It follows, of course, that without the non-proliferation treaty, we would, indeed, be in a far worse position.

I might also mention, in passing, your own statement; and the statement of the distinguished representative of Zaire,

and those of China and Mexico, as providing further stimuli in some cases for all of us, but particularly on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I would like just to note also the importance, in itself, and also as a precedent, of the question of China to reduce its armed forces.

Turning to the outer space question, I think all members of this forum took special satisfaction at our success earlier this year, after much effort, in reaching agreement on a mandate for this subsidiary body. That agreement reflected, as we saw it, a constructive spirit of compromise and a wide-spread appreciation of the importance and urgency of concrete work on issues directly relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The difficulties which were experienced and which are still being experienced in reaching agreement on a work programme should not discourage us. While such problems give us cause for concern, there are also signs of progress behind the scenes. Certainly, if we are to have any success at all, we must sustain the spirit of readiness to achieve a mutual accommodation which enabled the Ad Hoc Committee to come into existence in the first place. We also take great satisfaction in our wise choice of Ambassador Alfarargi of Egypt, a close friend and colleague of many years standing, as Chairman of that Ad Hoc Committee. It will be recalled that in an earlier statement, I undertook, on behalf of the Canadian Government, to table a working

paper, perhaps a series of working papers on outer space, at the appropriate time. As part of our preparation for participation in discussion of that issue, the Canadian Government has compiled a comprehensive, two-volume compendium of the working papers and final records of the CD which relate to outer space questions.

This compendium is similar to those we have tabled in the past on chemical weapons and, more recently, on radiological weapons. We are pleased to announce that, as a modest, but we hope practical, contribution to our deliberative efforts, particularly to the widespread desire for concrete documentation, and having drawn on the much appreciated assistance of the secretariat staff, copies of this compendium will shortly be provided to all members of the CD, if not today, then we hope, tomorrow.

We hope and trust that they will be found to be a useful working tool. Both by its very bulk as by its very substance, this documentation illustrates, we believe, not only the extent of past work but also certain achievements on matters relating to outer space. It illustrates also of course, that there is a daunting range of issues and problems to be addressed falling squarely within the terms of our mandate. I urge that we get down to the task at hand as quickly as possible, and we hope very sincerely that this modest contribution by the Canadian Delegation will assist us in the process.