



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the
United Nations Office and other international organizations

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Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Thank you Mr. Chair,

At the outset I would like to congratulate, you for the assumption of the chairmanship of this open ended Working Group. We also thank the panelists for their presentation this morning.

Mr. Chair

The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its position that the outer space is the common province of all humankind, the exploration and use of outer space must be for the benefit of all nations and the outer space should be the domain of peace and international cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

More than four decades after the Conference on Disarmament was mandated to negotiate a legally binding instrument for preventing an arms race in outer space, that goal is still remained as elusive as before and the international community is still faces security challenges and threats emanating from the ever-increasing weaponisation and militarization of outer space.

In the same vein, global security and economic development and prosperity of States is ever increasingly more dependent on space.

These two entangling trends have made it more compelling than before to save the CD mandate on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer-Space, PAROS and to implement and save the outer-space from the scourge of divisive incremental engineering aiming at fundamentally oversimplified political agenda and subject it to distinction between responsible and irresponsible behaviors in outer space. This would be downgrading the noble agenda of CD on PAROS as well as the international Disarmament agenda.

The impact of deviation of the long lasting mandate of PAROS to negotiate a legally binding instrument for the full and effective prevention of an arms race in

outer space, as a complementarity to space law for peaceful uses of outer space on a balanced and non-discriminatory basis is more pressing that we cannot waste our time by engaging in a counter-productive discussion which is ultimately political divisive.

Mr. Chair,

The concept of Responsible Behavior might be an attractive political gesture but still, is a subjective, oversimplified, vague and unclear phrase. Characterization of behaviors would become a tool for some countries to evade their own responsibility and put the blame on others. It creates ideological bias, double standards, political divides, technical barriers, and abusive illegal unilateral restrictions as pretext to hamper the peaceful uses of outer space.

The militarization of space can be defined as one of the most important challenges of the 21st Century; as the result of some countries, particularly those that insist on adopting responsible behavior principles and norms, that are developing their space military programs. While near 100 anti-satellite tests have been carried out by different countries, it should be further noted that in such circumstances that some countries are trying to extend their space military assets, categorizing these activities under responsible behavior is contradictory.

It is disbelieving that reducing threats through responsible behavior could be decently more effective and a more efficient response to the current space arms race than a legally binding instrument.

Outer space insecurity should be a shared concern of all humankind and preventing of an arms race in outer space should be the obligation of all countries, particularly those with the most advanced space capabilities.

Mr. Chair,

It is a matter of grave concern to witness approaches and policies of some states declaring outer space as a new war zone, developing military capabilities in outer space, establishing space military force, conducting military exercises and seeking superiority position through advanced military technologies in outer space. All such actions are threats to outer space security and sources of clash and conflicts that lead to the more weaponization of outer space

Mr. Chair,

Sovereign equality of States, the concept that all states are equal, is a fundamental principle of international law. In light of such a principle of international law, how can a state or a group of states can postulate themselves to judge other states' behaviours and labeled them as responsible or irresponsible?

Norms of responsible or irresponsible behaviors which would result in double standards and arbitrary judgments would end up being a mere political declaration in the hands of some to impose limitations and restrictions on peaceful activities of new space faring nations and dictate their own discriminatory political motivated attitude. Therefore, such a conceptualization of space activities is unacceptable.

In the absence of a legally binding instrument, selective and discriminatory approaches would be nothing more than politically motivated measures that lead to unjustified and unacceptable policies, which prevent other space-faring nations' peaceful activities in outer space. At the same time, these measures are detrimental to the mutual confidence, trust and capacity building for the developing states to benefit from new space peaceful opportunities for their economic social developments.

Mr. Chair,

Preventing of an arms race in outer space is the essential prerequisite for ensuring the security and the peaceful uses of outer space. Conclusion of a legally binding instrument should be the top priority in international disarmament agenda. Outer space should not to be converted to a new battlefield of great powers' competitions.

Mr. Chair,

Space security and space safety are two different dimensions of outer space. Space security has to do with weaponization of space and arms race in outer space and the root causes of weaponization of arms race in space is that certain countries pursuing unilateral military and dominance in space. Space safety instead is more about the risks associated with orbit congestion, collision, space debris that all countries are facing, when conducting their space activities. Therefore, both issues are different in nature and should be followed separately. In this connection, it is highly imperative to conclude an international legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament at an early date.

Mr. Chair,

TCBMs can provide some clarity and confidence, however, they cannot substitute legally binding instrument on prevention of outer space arms race. While the treaty-based obligations are easily being violated, it is too-naïve to expect that the political norms or TCBMs can prevent an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Chair,

In any legally binding instrument a balanced should be struck between outer space security and peaceful use of outer space through maintaining the equal rights of all countries on the peaceful use; in particular, the interests of developing countries and emerging space-faring nations, should be fully ensured. In this regard, the CD should play a central role in preventing an arms race in outer space. Other multilateral

UN bodies such as the First Committee, the Fourth Committee of the UNGA as well as UNCOPUOS, within their mandates, could facilitate the negotiation of PAROS in CD.

Mr. Chair,

We along with the G-21 of the CD have supported China and Russia proposal on PAROS, as a basis for establishment of the ad hoc committee in CD to negotiate on PAROS. We have also participated actively in UN GGE on PAROS established in 2017, which held two sessions in 2018 and 2019. Although the PAROS GGE ultimately failed to have a consensus report, which was blocked by one country, however, the GGE had an unprecedented in-depth and substantive discussion on elements of an international legally binding instrument on preventing an arms race in outer space. Such discussion has laid foundation for negotiation of PAROS treaty in CD.

Mr. Chair,

Last but not the least, neither UN GA resolution 75/86 nor 76/231 adopted by consensus. Many countries, including those with advanced space technologies and long experiences have voted against or abstained to these resolutions. This is indicative of the fact that these resolutions, take us further from our noble objective of PAROS that continues to be a high priority for international community through universally acceptable and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument.

Mr. Chair,

It is critical to note that achieving a safe, secure and sustainable space is more practical and feasible through developing a legally binding instrument on the preventing an arms race in outer space, than introducing any ambiguous concept.

The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly opposes the weaponization of space. We maintain the position that the exploration and use of outer space should serve the purpose of promoting the economic, scientific and social development of all countries for the benefit of all humankind.

The space war and confrontation in outer space should be prevented through multilateral means to guarantee the preservation of space for peaceful purposes.

Finally, Mr. Chair, it is of critical importance that all states, including those that voted against or abstained, have the opportunity to express their views and positions. Their concerns be heard and dully reflexed in the final report of this OEWG.

I thank you Mr. Chair,