

**Iran Intervention before the Open Ended Working Group on Reducing the
Space Threats through Responsible Behaviours
Geneva-13 May 2022**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Let me appreciate the panelists during the past few days. Their presentations were interesting and thought provoking and we listened to them attentively. We would like to share some comments in this regard. My delegation also would like to appreciate you for the open conducting this week meetings.

Mr. Chair,

It is a matter of concern that a military alliance declared outer space as an “operational domain”, a country designated the outer space as a “war-fighting domain” and some others countries established space commands. These are all against the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the 1967 Space Treaty.

In such a challenging situation, the international community is facing security challenges and threats emanating from the ever-increasing weaponisation and militarization of outer space.

Having said that, let me share the following comments or observations.

First, it is clear that any wrongful act in outer space has severe consequences on earth. In accordance with Article II of the Outer-Space Treaty using space as exclusive zones is prohibited as it stipulates that the ‘outer-space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.’

Beyond the observations that our distinguished Chinese colleague referred to with regard to the application of IHL to outer-space, if we accept such an application, does a party of an international armed conflict, have right to capture and detain astronauts, as most of them are members of the other party’s armed forces? While the States are obliged to rescue and return astronauts as the “envoys of mankind” under Article V of the Outer Space Treaty?

Second, we believe that definitions are as important as laying the foundation for any possible further work before a conduct can be labelled as responsible or irresponsible. If we are supposed to design a legal frame work, it is imperative to have a common

understanding with regard to basic principles in a legally binding approach. Therefore, it is vital to have a legal framework and a clear definition of the elements that are going to be used for responsible conduct of states.

Third, the most pressing issues facing the international community with regard to the outer space are the prevention of an arms race in outer-space, prevention of weaponization of outer space, as well as assurances that the outer-space will be used solely for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all countries and be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and facilitating and encouraging of international co-operation.

Forth, the responsibility of States with regard to the public and private entities' activities in space, States should be held accountable for their private companies in space.

Fifth, The OST represents the basic legal framework of international space law. UNOOSA has reaffirmed the following principles as the core principles of the treaty: the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all mankind and outer space is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means. Policies and activities of some states are in direct violation of these principles. How those programme and policies could be perceived as in line with the principles governing the outer space?

Finally, as we heard during this session, many references were made to different aspects of prevention of an arms race in outer space. While this is an inspiring thing indicating the importance of the PAROS. However, at the same time many references were made to responsible or irresponsible, accepted or unaccepted behaviours as if it is taken for granted and as if there a common understanding on the issue of the so called responsible behaviors. Or as if this working group is tasked to deal with some aspects PAROS or is supposed to duplicate the work of the CD or the CUPOUS which are dealing with security and safety of outer space respectively. PAROS is the common aspiration of international community.

These observations can continue, however, I just referred to some of them. That is why my delegation is of the view that cherry-picking and selective approach would not be in the benefit of all countries and lead to more division.

We think that any approaches that limit or prevent free access of all states, particularly the developing states to outer space, are unacceptable.

The best way to tackle the threats to space or originating from that domain is through a comprehensive and multilateral approach that would encompass all aspects related to outer space including prevention of an arms race in outer space, prevention of militarization and weaponization of outer space along with full commitment to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes can guarantee the international cooperation and capacity building in particular for the benefit of developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

Having said that, this week's discussion showed that there are yet contending approaches regarding to PAROS. One of which is yet firmly believe that the long standing mandate of PAROS in the form of negotiations of a legally binding instrument.

The second is the approach of responsible behaviours which is contested at least, in the view of numbers of delegations. So, the second approach based on this week's discussion should not be taken for granted and this should be duly reflected in the outcome of the OEWG and I hope in the Chair's summary.

I thank you Mr. Chair,