



ПОСТОЯННОЕ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ПРИ ОТДЕЛЕНИИ ООН И ДРУГИХ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯХ
В ЖЕНЕВЕ

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN GENEVA

№ 2517

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (Geneva branch) and has the honor to submit the paper: "Considerations regarding the document prepared by the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviors (A/AC.294/2022/3)" co-sponsored by the Republic of Belarus, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

It is requested that this paper be circulated among all the OEWG Member States.

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the UNODA (Geneva branch) the assurances of its highest consideration. *aa*

Annex: 2 pp.

Geneva, "26" August 2022

THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS
(GENEVA BRANCH)

Geneva



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Considerations regarding the document prepared by the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours (A/AC.294/2022/3)

The Russian Federation has studied the Chair's summary outlining the outcomes of the first session of the OEWG on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours (Geneva, 9-13 May 2022) prepared by him in his personal capacity under his own responsibility. We note unbalances and distortions of the actual discussions in it.

The document ignores strong appeals of many States to an earliest launch of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space pursuant to the decisions of the First UN GA Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. Instead, the accent is made solely on the position of a number of States that mentioned the possibility of elaborating in the future some legally binding instrument following on from "norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours in outer space" without specific reference to the objectives of prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

Also, the text does not reflect any references made by States to the Russia-China draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, and the threat or use of force against space objects as the only document to date, on the basis of which negotiation of a legally binding instrument on PAROS could be launched. Besides, the initiative/political commitment of no first placement of weapons in outer space, which enjoys broad international support, has been discussed at the OEWG session and numbers already 30 States as full participants, is not mentioned at all.

Other discrepancies also draw attention. The intention of the States - participants in the OEWG to elaborate a common understanding of terms “armed attack”, “threat or use of force in outer space” and “undesirable actions falling in a “gray area” and surpassing the “threshold” of an armed attack or use of force” is presented as a shared position. However, there is no visible consensus on the need to discuss these issues in the OEWG. On the contrary, a number of spacefaring nations, including the Russian Federation, firmly opposed the idea of considering outer space as an arena for a possible conflict or confrontation between States, having indicated that such an approach contradicts the principles of today’s international space law, which provides for exclusively peaceful exploration of outer space.

The document lacks any reference to the issue raised by a number of delegations to elaborate a common understanding of the term “threats” in relation to outer space and its difference by content, sources and consequences from the terms “risks”, “dangers” or “hazards” and “difficulties” related to outer space activities.

The idea expressed by a number of delegations to create an international mechanism of exchange of data on the near-Earth space situation seems important in terms of increasing the sustainability, predictability and safety of outer space activities, including in the context of addressing threats in, from and against outer space, and preventing conflicts in outer space.

The Chair’s document states the possibility of the use of maritime and air law provisions with regard to outer space as a shared opinion of States. While relevant critical remarks made by the Russian and other delegations were not incorporated.

The document does not capture the interest of many OEWG participants to further consider the issue of regulating the outer space activities for peaceful purposes strictly in the framework of the UN Outer Space Committee without overlapping this discussion at other relevant international venues.

We expect these remarks to be taken into account within the OEWG work.