



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the  
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**Statement by Mr. Nasserddin Heidari  
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before the Second Session of the OEWG on reducing Space Threats  
through Norms, Rules and Principles of responsible Behaviours  
Geneva, 12-16 September 2022**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Thank you Mr. Chair,**

At the outset I would like to welcome you back to the Chair of the Second meeting of this OEWG to facilitate comprehensive exchange of views on norms, rules, and the principles of responsible behaviors, and develop convergence on the basis of consensual collective wisdom, so as to contribute to achieving the goal of prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also thank the Secretariat for preparing this second meeting. We likewise thank different panelists these three days.

**Mr. Chair,**

We have carefully studied your summery of the discussions of the first meeting under your own responsibility. We along some other delegations have noticed that the Chair summery have not reflected the views and positions of our group as properly as it should be. We are group countries that have

substantively, difficulty with the so-called the concept of responsible behavior as a standard norm to substitute or delay the negotiation of a legally binding instrument for PAROS, which is long awaited mandate of the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

We noted that, all States Participating in the first session have been engaged in serious and substantive discussions in the spirit of all to be considered. Mr. Chair has already respected the views of those against the norm setting as responsible or irresponsible instead of legal norms and indicated that he would consider their views. That is way this group of countries sponsored a statement mentioning that the chair summery should have been considering their views accordingly.

**Mr. Chair,**

The growing development of space technologies, the incremental rising of conflicts in outer space, and the activities of some governments to dominate and seek superiority in space, has revealed the inadequacy of existing international legal instruments in the face of new challenges to maintain the security of outer space and promote its peaceful use and exploration.

More states are widely and deeply involved in space activities, and some private actors are also involved in space launch activities and space applications and have been merged with combating space systems. Due to the increasing

number of stakeholders in the use of outer space and the growing dependence of human life on the benefits of the outer space applications, maintaining stable outer space, peaceful and secure, becomes more vital than ever before. It remains as elusive as before that the international community is still faces security challenges and threats arising from the ever-increasing weaponisation and militarization of outer space.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterate its well-known position that the outer space is the common province of all humankind, and the exploration and use of which must be for the benefit of all nations and should remain the domain of peaceful activities and international cooperation. It is now more compelling than before that the prevention of an arms race in outer space known as PAROS remains as high priority security agenda for the international community at large, to negotiate a legally binding instrument in the Conference on Disarmament. This long awaited mandate of the CD should not to be converted to a fundamentally oversimplified political agenda and subject current risky and dangerous military activities and weponisation of outer space to a dichotomy of distinction between responsible and irresponsible behaviors in outer space.

As my delegation said in the first meeting, this would be downgrading the noble agenda of CD on PAROS to negotiate a legally binding instrument as well the International Disarmament Agenda. The deviation from the long

lasting mandate of CD on PAROS, to negotiate a legally binding instrument for the full, effective and non-discriminatory prevention of an arms race in space, is now more pressing and urgent than ever before.

The legally binding instrument based on sovereign equality of all states as fundamental principle of international law, can complement the space law and fill the legal gaps and contribute to reducing the risks and threats of an arms race in space. We have given our opinion of why the discussion of “responsible behavior” is intrinsically a political agenda which eventually is divisive and ultimately in the absence of legally binding instrument for PAROS, will end up with the situation where some group of states would postulate themselves in an arbitrary manner to judge about the others behaviors in our working paper as our contribution to this second session.

In this working paper we have explained that the so-called the concept of responsible behavior might be an attractive political gesture, but is subjective, oversimplified, vague and unclear phrase to define norm setting as standard of appropriate behavior for political act that complying with it, is driven by political expectations. Because norms are usually being set instead of law based on expectations, they are easier to be adapted to a political situation or situations of a particular state or states who are against the pursuit of legal agreements to keep their flexibility for example in case of outer space to follow freely their

national superiority and hegemony in outer space. This is new gesture to bypassing the CD PAROS mandate. That is why we are not convinced that behavioral approach is the right way forward to pave the way for negotiating a legally binding as it is claimed by some of our interlocutors in this OEWG.

Characterization of behaviors through norms instead of legal agreements, as past experiences has shown, would become a tool for some countries to evade their own responsibility and put the blame on others. It creates ideological bias, double standard, political division, technical barriers, and abusive unilateral restrictions as pretext to hamper the peaceful use of outer space. Only within legal treaty Ideological bias, double standards and unilateral sanctions, political divides and technical barriers could be abandoned and abuses of such pretext as security threats to hamper the peaceful use of outer space could be hampered.

It is dubious that reducing threats through behavioral approach could be in reality more effective and efficient response to the current space arms race. The current militarization of space is as severe as behavioral approach cannot overcome the challenges of space security to create common understanding among the members of international community.

Political norms in general comparing to legal approaches create a lot of limitation and loopholes to be effectively implemented. Such approaches are more prone to discrimination and they are subject to differing political

interpretations of responsibilities. They are not viable way towards maintaining space security in particular because of the competitions and adversarial nature of the current arms race in space. It would be logically dealing with consequence instead of cause.

Since this session is mostly devoted to discuss of different kinds of risks and threats to space, it should be emphasized that the risks of space-to space, space to earth as well as earth to space conflicts are high. It should be noted that space security is now more prone to tensions that preventing an arms race in outer space is the crucial precondition for peaceful, safety and the sustainable use of outer space.

The root cause of such an arms race is that a powerful state attempts to dominate outer space. The cold war mentality and unilateral strategic advantages is yet prevailing that it authorizes space operations to dominate outer space. It pursues a strategy of “space dominance” and declares outer space as a war fighting domain. It established Space Force and Space Command, and merged commercial space enterprises into their space combat systems.

Moreover, space weapon tests and military exercises are frequently conducted; military alliances were established to enhance combat readiness in space. In addition, some other space powers established dedicated space military bodies to increase their capacity of space forces. Certain military-

political bloc even defined outer space as an operation domain where collective defense provisions are applicable.

Such actions evidently demonstrate the rising risks of weaponization and arms race in space. These activities have exacerbated the security dilemma for other countries in particular those that are not attached their security to certain blocs. This is a very negative trend that has impacted the global strategic stability and long-term impairment of space peace and security.

In recent years, a certain state as being the first country to test anti-satellite weapons and creating more space debris than any other countries has increased its plans and actions to achieve military and strategic superiority to gain control of space. In a hypocritical and misleading move, it talks about banning the testing of anti-satellite missiles, which is accompanied by the support of allies. Furthermore, with the integration of commercial activities to military operations, security-legal challenges are expanding and as a result, hostile actions against other countries are growing.

In this situation, other countries inevitably will have to take countermeasures to defend themselves and then the conflict will increase exponentially. To redress this situation, concrete steps should be taken to preserve outer space as a realm of peace and free from hostilities. This clearly is indicator of the fact that such tensions and hostilities cannot be reduced by

norms of so called responsible behavior.

The most urgent agenda of the international community should be to preserve space security through reducing outer space threats and risks of military confrontation by negotiating a standard legal treaty in which the rights and obligations of States Parties would be defined and preserved, thus reducing space-to-earth and space-to-space threats through the deployment of any weapons and offensive military facilities and preventing the spread of space-to-earth and space-to-space threats, because other threats (earth-to-space and earth-to-earth) will eventually occur as if, a country to be threaten from space and in response to such threats it has to defend itself to protecting its security, territorial integrity and sovereignty. This is a security dilemma now for all.

Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that crafting a legal framework for regulating obligations and rights of states in outer space is now an urgent task, in view of the current threats and risks of an arms race in outer space. In this regard, it is necessary to define legal responsibility of all states in equal manner so as some are not more equal than others.

**I thank you Mr. Chair.**