Mr. Chairman,

Space security is an important priority for Canada. We know this holds true for many of the States represented here. Steps that we take today can help to ensure that humanity’s future in outer space is both peaceful and based on shared values and practical cooperation.

Canada’s concept of space security includes equitable access to an outer space that is useable and safe for peaceful purposes. Such an approach would be consistent with existing non-offensive military uses of space. It stresses the value of multilateral engagement to meet the security needs of all stakeholders. It seeks to avoid an arms race involving asymmetric technologies and unpredictable results.

Mr. Chairman,

As part of its space security approach, Canada strongly supports the development of international law to protect the global community’s orbital assets and to ensure progress in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. With over 500 active satellites currently in orbit, with an estimated commercial value of 86 billion US dollars, it is clear that the world has an enormous stake in maintaining an outer space free of the threat of destruction.

An integrated treatment of diverse and increasingly inter-related space issues is needed. Such integration could tie together work being undertaken by the International Telecommunications Union on the international coordination of radio frequencies and orbital slots; the Conference on Disarmament’s efforts toward the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and the efforts of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Integration of action on these fronts could serve to build a structure of interrelated commitments as building blocks towards the eventual development of a comprehensive multilaterally-agreed instrument in the space security field.

Mr Chairman

Space weaponisation is only one of many aspects of space security, but one that has received much attention. Space remains the last broad environment in which we have not introduced weapons. Canada shares the interest of many states in ensuring the protection of orbital assets, but believes that there are options other than space weaponisation that could effectively, singly or in combination, achieve this need. Canada remains convinced that one of the best ways to ensure space security, and thereby contribute to global security, is agreement on a prohibition against orbital weapons.

Weaponisation would make increasingly vulnerable the satellites upon which we depend.
communicate with each other, to monitor the environment, to facilitate remote sensing and to provide education and medical services, as well as to support domestic policing, border control, and search and rescue. The security of existing ballistic missile launch warning systems, as well as the surveillance systems which support the verification of compliance with international treaties on weapons of mass destruction, would also be threatened, in particular by anti-satellite weapons. Weaponisation could thus undermine global and human security and should be avoided.

Mr. Chairman,

Canada sees a growing need to negotiate a multilateral convention on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In this regard, we are encouraged by the recent progress made toward a resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament and urge all members to facilitate the CD’s commencement of action on PAROS.

With the growing commercial and public developments in outer space, Canada is looking to cooperate with like-minded states in the creation of a clear and integrated vision of space security. Civil society has an important stake in space security, and Canada encourages their engagement in this process as well.

Mr. Chairman,

As is evident from what I have said, Canada believes outer space represents a promising area for preventive diplomacy. We hope to stimulate more attention to this subject and would be grateful to hear the views of others on how best to secure outer space for non-offensive military and civilian purposes.

Thank you.