Mr. Chairman,

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has long been a global demand in the face of the serious danger it poses to international peace and security. As a result, the international community has established a series of legal instruments aimed at this objective, like the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Treaty on Outer Space (1967), and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1979).

These instruments have played a constructive role in the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space and the regulation of outer space activities. They have also been of significance in relation to the ban on the deployment of weapons of mass destruction and certain military activities in outer space.

Cuba supports the efforts undertaken in the framework of the UN General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. We endorse the urgent establishment of special committee in the Conference on Disarmament to initiate negotiations on an international legal instrument on banning the deployment of weapons in outer space. General Assembly resolution 63/68 is a very important contribution to said efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Last year, we witnessed the official presentation at the Conference on Disarmament of a joint initiative by the Governments of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China, which advanced a draft treaty on banning outer space weapons. This initiative has been gaining support from a number of countries, and is aimed at banning not only the development of outer space weapons but also the use of force against satellites and other space objects.

This concrete measure designed to keep international peace and security in space-related activities, requires the support of the international community to be undertaken.

NAM Heads of States or Governments, at their 15th Summit Conference held last July in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt, reiterated their concern over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defense systems and the threat of weaponization of outer space.
Mr. Chairman,

Transparency and confidence-building measures are not a substitute for arms control and disarmament measures, or a prerequisite for the application of the latter. Nevertheless, they can facilitate the achievement of disarmament commitments and measures for their verification.

Some of these measures on the outer space could include:

- The convening of an international conference to analyze strict compliance with existing agreements on the peaceful uses of outer space.

- Review of the current legal regime regulating outer space activities in the light of technological advances, which has been continually blocked by certain States on the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

- The adoption of multilateral agreements for the exchange of information on the peaceful uses of outer space.

- The development of international cooperation mechanisms which guarantee to all countries equal access to the benefits of the utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes.

- Exchange of information on the major trends of the space policies of States, the principle programmes dealing with outer space research and utilization and the orbital parameters of space objects.

- Extending invitations to observers to attend the launching of space objects on a voluntary basis.

- Demonstration of space and rocket technologies.

- Issuing notifications about scheduled launchings of spacecraft, scheduled space maneuvers that can result in dangerous proximity to spacecraft of other States, and the re-entry of guided spacecraft from orbit into the atmosphere.

- Consultations to clarify the information provided on outer space research and utilization programmes, on ambiguous situations and on other matters which are cause for concern; and to discuss the application of transparency and confidence-building measures agreed on in space activities.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can play an important part in the drafting, adoption and implementation of a new treaty banning the deployment of outer space weapons, and the use or threat of use of force against spatial objects. They would also help to create conditions conducive to the conclusion of a new agreement.
Regarding the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space, which is also of international concern, Cuba considers that it must be restricted to the extent possible, until there is a clearly defined security framework and more concrete agreements have been initiated thereupon. This limited use must be accompanied by comprehensive and transparent information to other States, explaining the measures taken to ensure security.

As in previous years, Cuba has decided to co-sponsor the draft resolutions on outer space that have been now presented to the First Committee. The drafts are: “Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities” and “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space”

We consider those texts significantly contribute to the efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Thank you.