Mr. Chairman,

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has been demanded by the world, in the face of the serious danger it poses to international peace and security.

Legal instruments pursuing this objective, namely the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies of 1979, have played a positive function in the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space and in the regulation of activities in the space.

They have also been important in the prohibition of the deployment of weapons of mass destruction and certain military activities in outer space.

However, the current legal system alone does not guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the consolidation and reinforcement of this system, the strict compliance with existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, and the review of new measures establishing effective and verifiable agreements on its prevention.

Cuba supports the efforts made in the framework of the United Nations General Assembly, and in the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, in this respect.

We endorse the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament on this matter. This Committee would play the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

In this context, we also support the establishment of a working group of the Conference on Disarmament in relation to this issue, at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Chairman,

Transparency and confidence-building measures are no substitute for arms control and disarmament measures; nor are they a precondition for implementation of the latter. Nevertheless, they can facilitate the implementation of disarmament commitments and the actions for their verification.
Some of these measures on outer space may include:

- Convening an international conference to review the strict compliance with existing agreements on the peaceful uses of outer space.

- Reviewing the current legal system governing activities in outer space, in the light of technological advances, which has been constantly blocked by some States in the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

- Concluding multilateral agreements for the exchange of information related to the uses of outer space.

- Developing international cooperation mechanisms that guarantee all countries equal access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space.

- Exchanging information on States' main policy directions on outer space, major programs for research and for the use of outer space, and the orbital parameters of space objects.

- Inviting observers to launches of space objects, on a voluntary basis;

- Demonstrating space technologies and rockets.

- Providing notification of scheduled launches of space vehicles, planned space maneuvers that might come dangerously close to space vehicles of other States and the re-entry of guided space vehicles from orbit into the atmosphere.

- Conducting consultations to clarify information provided on programs for research and for the use of outer space, on ambiguous situations and on other matters of concern and to examine the implementation of agreed transparency and confidence-building measures for space-based activities.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can play an important role in the drafting, approval and implementation of a new treaty banning the deployment of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against space objects. They would also help create favorable conditions for the conclusion of a new agreement.

Cuba reaffirms the need to guarantee the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for the benefit of all countries, regardless of their level of economic or scientific development.

Thank you