ITALY

66TH SESSION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT ON

OUTER SPACE (DISARMAMENT ASPECTS)

BY

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Mr. President,

The prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of strategic stability. Italy is fully committed, together with its EU partners, to strengthening the security of activities in outer space that contribute to the development and security of states. We therefore promote international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We supported last year’s Resolution on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space, tabled by the Russian Federation and sponsored by my country. We encourage the establishment of effective TCBMs amongst those most active space-faring nations. We are committed to the implementation of last year’s resolution and we look forward to the role to be played by the Group of Governmental Expert in this regard.

Together with its EU partners, Italy supports the elaboration of an international and voluntary set of guidelines, a tool that would strengthen safety, security and predictability of all space activities. Such guidelines should, among other things, limit or minimise harmful interference, collisions or accidents in outer space, as well as the creation of debris.

To this end, the EU has launched a proposal for an international Code of Conduct for Outer Space activities. A draft Code has been prepared and is currently being discussed by the EU with a number of key partners. The Code is based on three principles:
- freedom for all to use outer space for peaceful purposes;
- preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit;
- due consideration for the legitimate security and defence needs of States.

Italy has been supportive of this initiative from the very beginning. The purpose of the draft Code is not to duplicate or compete with initiatives already dealing with this specific issue, including those presented at the Conference on Disarmament. On the contrary, as a transparency and confidence building measure, the international draft Code does insist on the importance to take all measures in order to prevent space from becoming an area of conflict and calls on nations to resolve any conflict in outer space by peaceful means.

We hope that the discussion during this session will help to clarify issues related to the EU proposal for an international Code of Conduct. Italy stands ready to share information on the matter.