STATEMENT

by Mr. Israil Tilegen, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

at the First Committee thematic discussion on “Outer Space” (disarmament aspects)

17 October 2011
New York
Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for the opportunity to present my delegation’s stand at this thematic debate on Outer Space.

The importance and robust expansion of the space domain, as a resource environment is increasing, compel us to review security and disarmament issues related to outer space. With larger number of space actors and stakeholders, and their diverse ways of using and relying upon outer space and space assets, there are increased benefits and risks. Our space environment is extremely fragile and vulnerable to being used in an unsustainable fashion. This reality makes space security an urgent issue, and it is encouraging to note that the international community is beginning to address it.

Kazakhstan endorses the initiatives of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China have tabled a draft treaty known as the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (the PPWT). However, due to gridlock within the Conference on Disarmament and a number of other political difficulties, the push toward a binding international agreement has not made much headway.

Though there seems to be widespread agreement among delegations about the importance of space security, they lay different emphases on non-binding transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) relative to formal treaties. Kazakhstan calls for a combination of both; firstly, a strong unequivocal Treaty reinforced by TCBMs, as proposed by a second resolution of the Russian Federation and China. This resolution established a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the subject, which will convene its first meeting in July 2012. We can look forward to a road map for the future, building on the work of the first GGE set up 20 years ago (1991-93), and its report on “confidence-building measures in outer space, including the different technologies available, possibilities for defining appropriate mechanisms of international cooperation in specific areas of interest.”

It is absolutely essential that the international community commits its best efforts to this GGE initiative which establishes norms of responsible behavior in space and perhaps even addressing some of the national security concerns of space-faring nations, so that they no longer feel the need to explore the possibility of weaponizing this fragile environment.

In addition, Kazakhstan is convinced that placing weapons in outer space will result in an advantage for the few, thus generating walls of distrust and suspicion, which we are only now beginning to break down with regard to nuclear and other weapons. What is more dangerous is that action by some countries with advanced space warfare technology can result in non-proliferation by other
countries also wanting to acquire it, as in the nuclear field. Past experience has proved that such theatre of military action can be concealed, thus becoming a major breach of international security. Presently, more than 130 countries possess sophisticated space programmes, or are developing them, using information from space assets for their own defense. Member States need to ensure that such dangerous weapons systems do not undermine the existing structure of agreements on arms limitation, particularly, in the nuclear-missile sphere.

Kazakhstan has no intention of pursuing the development of space weapons, or deploying them in outer space, now or in the future. On the other hand, my country, which hosts the first and largest cosmodrome on its territory, the Baikonur, is actively developing a national civilian space programme, including the creation of a space rocket complex, Baiterek. This set-up will facilitate the country to become part of the world market of space services and access to latest technologies within the norms of international collective security.

In July 2005, Kazakhstan acceded to the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and is aspiring and actively working to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Although not a formal member of the MTCR, Kazakhstan has strictly followed its regulations in its export policy for the past several years, and hopes to gain the support and confidence of Member States to make possible its bid for membership at the next session of the MTCR.

My country stands ready to cooperate in a collective collaboration with others to guarantee full realization of our goal of an international community on the basis of fairness and equality, without any exception. Our past and current lessons regarding difficulties in abolishing accumulated weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and chemical, prove the need for preventing similar obstacles for eliminating space weapons and space debris in the future. Any shortsightedness would only detract our global limited financial resources for sustainable development, which the United Nations is striving to accomplish. To conclude, Kazakhstan would like to reinforce that our common goal is to ensure that space must remain a sphere of cooperation, free from weapons, for humankind to use it for its peaceful development and advancement.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.