First Committee of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly
Thematic Debate on Outer Space

New York <Check against Delivery>

Mr. Chairman,

1. This year marks a significant milestone in the history of space activities and international cooperation: the 50th anniversary of the first human spaceflight. This accomplishment opened a new frontier of science with advancements and applications in a wide variety of fields such as weather forecasting, disaster management and telecommunications. Over the past five decades, our ventures into space have made unprecedented contributions to the well-being of mankind by facilitating progress towards sustainable development.

2. Considering the advantageous impact of space science on mankind as a whole, maintaining space for peaceful purposes and preserving it as a usable domain will be a key challenge as we consider the future of humanity in outer space. Given the importance of the peaceful and cooperative use of outer space, and the active discussions simultaneously taking place in various international fora, we will be able to achieve maximum synergy by sharing respective expertise and experiences. In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of close cooperation and enhanced dialogue among those fora, such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the CD, the First and Fourth Committees of the UN, and the International Telecommunications Union.

Mr. Chairman,

3. As the number of satellites increases, so does the amount of space debris in outer space as well as the increased likelihood of corresponding collisions. In this regard, the enhancement of the multilateral framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space is urgently needed. There seems to be a growing consensus in the international community over the fact that the existing outer space framework remains desirable, and major space-faring countries have made constructive proposals such as the new United States space policy in this regard.

4. That is why the Republic of Korea considers the discussion on the “Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)” to be of great importance. My government believes that (1) improving the implementation and universalization of the existing international regime, (2)
developing transparency and confidence-building measures, and (3) introducing a new legally binding instrument that is not mutually exclusive, needs to be explored in a balanced way.

5. First, as a party to the Outer Space Treaty, Liability Convention, Rescue Agreement and Registration Convention, the Republic of Korea actively supports the efforts to promote understanding, acceptance and implementation of the existing international regime. Over the past 50 years, we have sought ways to promote universal adherence to, and ensure full compliance with, existing agreements and arrangements made by space-faring nations. Progress is evidenced by the increased number of State Parties to those agreements such as the Registration Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct as well as the raised awareness among states of their obligations regarding outer space activities.

6. Second, transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) are highly important elements in ensuring multilateral cooperation with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space. Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) help enhance stability and security in outer space by reducing tensions and preventing conflicts. Considering the huge impact on long-term human activities in space, the need for international coordination remains high. In this regard, we support UN General Assembly Resolution 65/68 and look forward to actively participating in the work of the group of governmental experts in 2012-2013, which will be established by the UN Secretary General following the resolution. In addition, we note the endorsement of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines by the UN General Assembly and also appreciate the European Union’s endeavors to elaborate on the draft “Code of Conduct on Outer Space Activities” as a concrete effort to enhance TCBMs.

7. Lastly, with regard to the efforts in seeking a new legally binding instrument, my Government notes the submission of the draft “Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat of Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects (PPWT)” by the Russian Federation and China. PAROS has been one of the core issues in the CD, and the draft PPWT may be used as a meaningful reference in substantive discussions when the CD adopts a programme of work.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The Republic of Korea has been actively pursuing and sharing the benefits of space technology and scientific cooperation. Since April 2011, Korea’s first geosynchronous satellite, which is also the first satellite in the world to carry both an Ocean Color Imager and
meteorological Imager, has been providing meteorological and marine environment monitoring services. Moreover, the Korea Multi-Purpose Satellite-5 (KOMPSAT-5), scheduled to be launched in mid-November, will carry Korea’s first Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) capable of executing all weather and all day observations. Korea also attaches great importance to sharing information and technology at the regional and international levels by providing satellite imagery to help restore regions from natural disasters and by holding training programs for developing countries.

9. As we look forward to the next semi-centennial of space exploration, Korea remains firmly committed to cooperation in the scientific and legal aspects of exploration and use of outer space. We anticipate that human activities and international interaction in outer space will only increase as space-related technologies continue to advance and become more widespread. In light of these expected developments, my delegation reiterates its support for the multilateral efforts to ensure the sustainable, long-term use of space for the benefit of all humankind.

Thank you. /END/