Mr Chair

Australia abstained on L47.

The resolution calls on states not to be the first to place weapons in outer space.

Australia notes the Explanations of Vote of the European Union and the United States and wishes to outline our three concerns with the resolution.

First, it does not adequately deal with the question of what constitutes a weapon in outer space.

The space environment is one where dual-use technologies abound. Any satellite capable of manoeuvre can be considered a space-based weapon. As such, it is particularly difficult to draw a line between a space object and a space weapon.

Second, we do not believe that a No First Placement Pledge would be effectively verifiable.

This obligation is of limited value without a means to verify compliance. We do not believe a No First Placement Pledge is consistent with the evaluation criteria for space-related transparency and confidence building measures established by consensus in the 2013 UN Group of Governmental Experts’ (GGE) study on transparency and confidence building measures for outer space activities (A/68/189).

Third, the resolution is solely focused on space-based weapons and does not address the threat of terrestrially-based weapons.

The most serious threats to space-based systems currently being developed are not those placed into space but those that are terrestrially-based, such as anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles and high energy lasers. The resolution is silent on these threats.

Mr Chair

Given these concerns, we are unable to support this resolution and have abstained.

Thank you.