

**Remarks at the Workshop on Outer Space
August 16, 2005**

Thank you Mr. Vasiliev,

I would first like to take a moment to thank the delegations of the Russian Federation and China for organizing this educative seminar and for the focus of our discussion have provided on the problems that we face and what can be done about them. We have found the interactive exchange you conducted with the Swedish delegation particularly useful, as also the inventory of suggestions and proposals made by different countries that was provided by the UNIDIR Representative.

My comment is specifically focused on the need to pursue the peaceful uses of outer space, since these activities are very much part of our daily lives. All nations have now become stake-holders in outer space – this stake is no longer confined to countries that have a capacity to launch satellites – with space-based communication and remote sensing straddling many areas of human activities including energy, ecology and provision of basic services. Any threat to space assets from the deployment of weapons in outer space could have disastrous consequences. India also believes that there is a legal lacuna in international law in addressing this issue.

India, is, therefore, ready to join negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to prevent an arms race in outer space. We also believe that member States of United Nations could consider a moratorium on the testing and deployment of all space-based weapons systems, while working towards a more comprehensive agreement, within the multilateral framework. For starters, work could begin on this in CD in conformity with the less-than-negotiating mandate for the Ad-hoc Committee on PAROS proposed by the delegation of China and the Russian Federation and included in the A-5 proposal, which has received support as the basis of CD's work programme, by the entire Group of 21.

Once weaponization of outer space begins, it may be too late to stop it. It will put into jeopardy not only peaceful uses, but also surveillance and other military uses of outer space that are essential for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why it is in our collective interest to keep outer space weapons-free.