



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CUBA, IN THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON OUTER SPACE (DISARMAMENT ASPECTS). First Committee. 63<sup>rd</sup> UNGA, 20th October 2008.**

Mr. Chairman,

The legal instruments on outer space, including the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Treaty on Outer Space (1967), and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1979) have played a constructive part in the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space and the regulation of outer space activities. They have also been of significance in relation to the ban on the deployment of weapons of mass destruction and certain military activities in outer space.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has long been a universal goal. Unfortunately, the existing treaties and agreements have failed to eliminate the dangers of the militarization of outer space and that they are insufficient to prevent the deployment of weapons in the cosmos.

Cuba supports the efforts under way in the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament, especially the negotiation in the Conference of an international legal instrument on banning the deployment of weapons in outer space, and to this end it supports the establishment of a special or ad hoc committee to initiate negotiations.

At the 2008 Conference on Disarmament, the Governments of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China officially presented a draft proposal for a treaty on banning outer space weapons. The draft proposal, which is gaining support from a number of countries, bans not only the development of outer space weapons but also the use of force against satellites and other space objects. In Cuba's view, concrete actions like these merit the support of the international community.

Regrettably, a number of the objects currently in outer space were launched for military or espionage purposes and will ultimately increase the amount of space debris, the mitigation of which has become a major challenge.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is also concerned about the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space. Although only a few highly developed countries are currently exploring this field, it will eventually have an impact on all countries.

Cuba considers that the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space should be restricted to the extent possible, until there is a clearly defined security framework and more concrete agreements have been initiated. Also in cases of limited use, the State in question should provide other States with comprehensive, transparent information on its activities, including the measures taken to ensure safe use.

Cuba remains convinced that, at present, there is no reason to consider using nuclear energy sources in Earth orbit, where the risks are considerably higher. Other efficient and much safer energy sources are available.

The Non-Aligned Movement has expressed its concern about the adverse consequences of the development and deployment of antiballistic-missile defence systems and the quest for advanced military technology capable of deployment in outer space, which had the potential to unleash an arms race and the subsequent development of advanced missile systems together with an increase in the number of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Although transparency and confidence-building are not a substitute for arms control and disarmament measures, they nevertheless can facilitate the achievement of disarmament commitments and measures for their verification.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can play an important part in the drafting, adoption and implementation of a new treaty banning the deployment of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against spatial objects.

As it has been the case in previous years, Cuba has decided to co-sponsor again the draft resolutions on outer space that have been presented in the First Committee. Those are the draft entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" and the draft "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

We consider that those texts significantly contribute to the efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Thank you