



**Statement**

**By**

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**Agenda Item 88  
Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space**

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The Sri Lanka delegation attaches high importance to the consideration of Agenda item entitled "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space". Sri Lanka together with the delegation of Egypt, has for many years, introduced the First Committee Resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space calling for the recommencing of stalled negotiations on PAROS at the earliest. Last year, with an unprecedented number of co-sponsors, the Resolution was adopted by 170 voting in favour.

It is well established that the outer space must be maintained as the property of all mankind, and its exploration and use for peaceful purposes must be for the common good of mankind. While acknowledging the positive role that progress in space technology can play in meeting global challenges, the potential threat of related dual use of technology is of great concern. My delegation is of the view that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, as a pre-requisite to promoting and strengthening international cooperation in its exploration for peaceful purposes.

We note with regret, however, that the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum has not yet come up with a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on this important subject. Therefore, we reiterate the call on the CD to establish an ad-hoc committee on PAROS with an appropriate mandate for carrying out relevant negotiations in all its aspects. We have supported the Russian, Chinese Proposal presented at the CD this year on PPWT as a constructive initiative.

As human civilization enters into 21st century, the development of science and technology has offered us an unprecedented opportunity to explore and use of outer space. As we cheer every success of peaceful exploration and use of outer space, we are also concerned over a series of developments. Space military technology is advancing rapidly. New Military and combat concepts and theories like "control of space" and "occupation of space" are emerging thereby triggering an arms race and what is well known as "race to the bottom".

An arms race in outer space, has the potential to inflict catastrophe to mankind. Prior and informed awareness of this possibility should encourage the international community to conclude appropriate international legal instruments to regulate the security aspects of outer space.

The exploration and use of outer space benefits all mankind. However the threats to space assets grow with our ever – increasing use of outer space. Human activities are not only leaving waste on the Earth, but also polluting space. Orbital paths are further cluttered by deserted

spacecrafts, discarded rockets debris, and outer space junk shed from hardware. Space debris has posed a great concern in countries which pursue space exploration. Accumulation of objects in Earth orbit has been increasing steadily in recent years and threatens space systems through the possibility of collisions. Therefore, some scientists have warned that if not controlled, the quantity of space debris will rise twice in 100 years. Implementation of global action plans must start now before the loss of critical space systems occur, but more importantly, before the loss of human life results from this debris

It is common knowledge that more and more satellites have been launched into outer space, more and more intelligent technology has been developed and more nations have become active in space. In effect, the world as a whole has become increasingly dependent on space activities involving very vulnerable space objects. All this heightens the importance of maintaining outer space for peaceful uses.

Concerted action to alleviate the threats to outer space security is an imperative need. Some advocate voluntary confidence building measures while others seek more ambitious proposals to prohibit the weaponization of space through multilateral negotiations.

Considering all the technical developments that have taken place in recent decades, it is important to acknowledge that the international instruments regulating outer space activities have not developed at the same pace. The existing legal regime for outer space, fails to eliminate the danger of the militarization of outer space and is insufficient to prevent the deployment of weapons. There is a need for the International Community to play a key role as it has done so far, in defining the international legal framework so as to facilitate the peaceful uses of outer space and encourage international cooperation for the benefit of all mankind.