Mr. President, It is a pleasure to welcome Indonesia’s assumption of the CD leadership and we of course stand ready to support you in any way we can.

In accordance with President Obama’s 2010 U.S. National Space Policy, the United States is pursuing bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, space. TCBMs are the means by which governments can address challenges and share information with the aim of creating mutual understanding and reducing tensions.

These TCBMs are pragmatic, voluntary, near-term actions that we can do to increase trust and prevent misperceptions, miscalculations, and mistrust between nations. To overcome these dangers and risks requires, in part, building confidence between nations, which can be achieved with transparency, openness, and predictability through, for example, information-sharing. TCBMs also have the potential of enhancing our knowledge of the space environment, by addressing important areas such as orbital debris, space situational awareness, and collision avoidance.

A recent space TCBM effort is the European Union’s draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, or “the Code.” In January 2012, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the U.S. decision to work with the European Union (EU) and other space-faring nations to develop an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The development of such a non-legally binding Code of Conduct is an effective, pragmatic and timely way of strengthening the long-term sustainability, stability, safety, and security of the space environment. The European Union is leading efforts to develop a text that is acceptable to the greatest number of governments. The United States believes the EU’s latest draft is a useful foundation and constructive starting point for developing a consensus on an International Code. We look forward to participating in a consultative meeting that the EU will be convening in the coming weeks.

In addition to the Code, there are a number of other complementary ongoing efforts to establish multilateral TCBMs. This includes the work of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), and the study by the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Space TCBMs.
I will focus on the UN GGE study on Outer Space TCBMs as we look forward to the second GGE session in Geneva in a few weeks on April 1-5. Under the capable chairmanship of our distinguished colleague Victor Vasiliev of Russia, the GGE offers an opportunity to advance a range of voluntary and non-legally binding TCBMs in space that have the potential to mitigate dangers and risks to space security.

The key objective of the GGE is to develop a consensus report to the UN Secretary General that outlines a list of pragmatic space TCBMs that nations can sign up to on a voluntary basis. As part of its effort to draw upon as much expertise as possible, the GGE has welcomed written contributions from intergovernmental bodies, industry and private sector, civil society, and other UN Member States not already represented in the group. The GGE serves as a real opportunity to move forward with pragmatic steps to strengthen stability in space through unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral measures.

The second GGE session will be held at the same time as the UN Institute of Disarmament Research’s annual space security conference on April 2-3. The United States is pleased to serve again as a sponsor of this conference, which this year will have the theme of “Enhancing Confidence, Ensuring Space Stability.” I encourage all CD delegations to participate as it provides a unique opportunity for the Geneva disarmament community to explore how space security can be ensured at the national, regional and multilateral levels.