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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 88 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: As announced yesterday, the meeting will be suspended at 12:30 p.m., in order to follow the yearly tradition of accommodating the presentation ceremony of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates.

We will first hear from the remaining speakers for the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”. Delegations are reminded to observe the speaking limits of five minutes for national statements.

Mr. Sano (Japan): I would like to commend your excellent stewardship and tireless efforts during the past weeks, Mr. Chair, and wish you all the best in coming weeks.

Japan firmly believes that it is essential to strengthen national measures to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as such measures will serve as a fundamental tool for preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons, as well as for adequately controlling chemical products. The universality of the Convention is also important. Japan has provided expertise and technical assistance to facilitate the accession of non-State parties to

the Convention. In that regard, Japan welcomes the accession of Myanmar and Angola to the CWC.

We praise the continued efforts made by the major chemical-weapon possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles. With the destruction of more than three quarters of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons verified, the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons continues to be the core objective of the Convention.

We welcome the fact that the destruction process outside the territory of Syria is almost completed and hope that all chemical weapon production facilities will be physically destroyed in accordance with the Convention as early as possible. We praise the combined efforts of the international community for their valuable contribution, both financially and in kind. Japan strongly condemns the continued use of toxic chemicals as weapons by any party in Syria. We are convinced that it is of the highest importance to bring all the facts to light. We welcome the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which establishes an Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify those involved in such use, and we emphasize the need to hold those responsible accountable. We call on all parties in Syria to cooperate fully with the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Over the past 40 years, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has played a vital role in international peace and security. Over the same time, we have witnessed tremendous advances in science and technology that have enormous benefits for mankind.

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However, their dual-use nature increases the risk of new biological threats due to their misuse or illicit use, in particular by non-State actors. Therefore, the universalization of the BWC has become more important than ever before to enhance international security. In that connection, Japan welcomes the recent ratification by Myanmar and the accession of Mauritania and Andorra.

Lastly, for the eighth Review Conference of the BWC next year, we need to start extensive dialogue on ways to strengthen the Convention. Japan will actively participate in such discussions, with a particular focus on responses to the rapid advances in science and technology.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation aligns itself with the joint statement made on behalf of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) (see A/C.1/70/PV.12).

We wish draw attention to the forthcoming BWC Review Conference. The international community hopes that it will mark the resumption of a multilateral negotiating process to strengthen the Convention. To that end, for the second year now we have been taking consistent steps to find possible solutions to the accumulated problems, on the basis of broad international involvement and agreement.

After a series of consultations and opinion polls, including with civil society, at the Meeting of Experts of the BWC in August, the Russian Federation officially submitted in Geneva a draft decision for the forthcoming Review Conference regarding the beginning of talks on strengthening the BWC. Our document contains the negotiating mandate for a new negotiating body — an open-ended working group — that will be mandated to elaborate, beginning in 2017, concrete measures and proposals to strengthen the Convention and improve its implementation, of that will later be included in the relevant legally binding document. The negotiating mandate, which will define the parameters for a future legally binding instrument, is as broad as possible in current intergovernmental realities. We will continue to work on this proposal together with all interested parties. The proposed negotiations will be a success if all States parties to the Convention and various regional groups achieve results that have added value for all, compared to the current situation.

As we all know, the implementation of the Convention on the basis of national resources proved to be ineffective, as the Convention has unfortunately no permanent multilateral instrument for its implementation. As we all know, after the adoption of the additional BWC protocol was blocked by the United States in 2001, measures the mechanism for confidence building measures has not been fully operationalized. The majority of Governments are simply unable to benefit from this instrument and therefore choose not to participate in it. The Russian delegation calls on everyone to mobilize the political will and to have a document ready for the upcoming Review Conference in November in order to start the practical work on strengthening the Convention. We cannot squander that opportunity.

Another related issue is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Russia has consistently supported the strengthening and universalization the CWC. We welcome the recent accession to the Convention of the Republic of Angola and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. We call on all other countries to follow their example if they have not already done so.

Russia reaffirms its commitment to the total elimination, under international control, of all remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons as soon as possible. In that context, we note the unprecedented success of the destruction of the Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons. We note in particular the positive role of the Syrian Government and its exceptional cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Tireless efforts, primarily on the part of the Syrian authorities, made in the difficult time of the battle of the Syrian people against international terrorism secured the destruction of the chemical warfare programme. In order to objectively assess the significance of what has happened, we must clearly recognize that that programme had a strategic importance for Syria comparable to Israel's nuclear programme. The remaining technical issues can and should be resolved as scheduled within the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and in accordance with its procedures.

We see no need to give this topic any more of a political tone than it already has, including by overemphasizing the subject of Syria in the relevant resolutions of the Committee. The increasing turn towards country-specific issues that began last year diverts attention from other areas of activity of the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that are no less important and distorts the actual state of affairs in the context of Syria's chemical demilitarization. If all these artificial subjects continue to be blown out of proportion, it is unlikely that the Russian Federation will be able to support any such document.

Mr. Ibrahim (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/70/PV.13).

Since the crisis in Syria began, our Government has repeatedly warned against the danger of the use of chemical weapons in our country by terrorist organizations, some of which have ties to Al-Qaida. We have expressed our serious fears about some regimes that support terrorists and their provision of chemical weapons to groups in Syria, while defaming the Syrian Government by claiming that it is actually the party that is using chemical weapons. While Syria did its utmost to warn the Security Council against this danger, and other entities in the United Nations, they did nothing to prevent terrorist organizations and Da'esh from using such weapons against civilians. Their reluctance to act represents a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions, including 1540 (2004) on counter-terrorism and combating the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Syria has upheld its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and has succeeded in meeting its obligations, despite the difficult circumstances. We are committed to complying with all the Convention's provisions in their entirety as a State party to the Convention and to our obligations as a member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with a view to strengthening the non-proliferation regimes for all weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East. That goal cannot be achieved without ensuring the adherence of Israel, the only State in the region that is not yet party to all the treaties and conventions related to the non-proliferation of such weapons.

In his most recent monthly report, issued on 23 September (see S/2015/737), the Director-General of the OPCW says that approximately 99 per cent of the chemical weapons in Syria had been destroyed and completely removed from Syria by June 2014. That means that the so-called Syrian chemical weapons

programme has ended. The technical details that still remain to be dealt with are very minimal and should be exclusively addressed by the OPCW, based on cooperation between it and the Syrian Government.

On 15 April 2013, a terrorist attack took place in Boston that resulted in a number of deaths and many injuries. The perpetrators used what the United States courts classified as a weapon of mass destruction, and Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Daniel Genck said that the bombs were made from pressure cookers packed with low-grade explosives containing ball bearings, nails and green hobby fuse. We strongly condemn any terrorist attack that results in anyone's death anywhere in the world, but what happened in Boston has led us to question the American definition of weapons of mass destruction and the kinds of weapons that successive United States Administrations have used in various places around the world. According to conclusions of United States courts such as the one I just mentioned, the United States itself has used all kinds of weapons of mass destruction against many different peoples all over the world, in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East — from nuclear to biological and chemical weapons, and from conventional weapons to cluster and radioactive munitions — according to its own classifications of such weapons.

We would like to emphasize that impartiality, integrity and non-politicization of the issues, together with complete cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, must be the basic principles governing the Joint Investigative Mechanism established in accordance with Security Council resolution 2235 (2015). We base that on our experience with previous missions that have violated their mandates, adopted and endorsed testimony given by fake witnesses and refused to coordinate with the Syrian authorities. Syria will cooperate with the Joint Investigative Mechanism in every possible way, as has been our custom with United Nations missions, on a basis of respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity and while ensuring that the results of the investigation are not manipulated in any way.

We encourage our colleagues in this meeting to examine the facts a little more closely before hurling accusations at Syria that could threaten the region and the entire world.

Mr. Tehrani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by

representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/C.1/70/PV.13)

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the full implementation and universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are of the utmost importance. That is not only because we want to fully enjoy the security and economic benefits of membership in the Convention, but also because of our experience as a victim of chemical weapons in recent history. We also strongly believe that the destruction of all chemical weapon stockpiles and of old and abandoned chemical weapons is a fundamental objective of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In that regard, we urge all possessor States parties to make every effort to abide by their commitments and cooperate fully with the OPCW.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the substantial progress that has been made in destroying Syria's production facilities through the cooperation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to receiving a professional and impartial report from the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission. It is essential to ensure that throughout the process the Mission respects the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic. We urge it to take into consideration the observations and shortcomings of the work of the previous fact-finding Mission.

With respect to the Joint Investigative Mechanism, my delegation believes the OPCW and its Executive Council have important roles to play in making it work effectively. We expect the Mechanism to fulfil its mandate in a professional, objective and impartial manner. We express our serious concern about the reports of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals by terrorists in the Middle East, in particular by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The relevant bodies of the OPCW should consider and investigate the issue in coordination with the States parties concerned.

The full implementation of the provisions of the CWC concerning the promotion of international cooperation and assistance is a shared commitment of all States parties. We strongly support the NAM position on the importance of strengthening the Convention through multilateral negotiations for a legally binding protocol. We continue to believe that this very important issue should be addressed in order to explore ways and means to respond to the desire of

international community for the early conclusion of such an instrument.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the importance role of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in the total prohibition on all biological and toxin weapons. The decision of the seventh Review Conference to include cooperation and assistance as one of the standing agenda items, with a particular focus on strengthening article X, on implementation, was a welcome step forward. However, we continue to believe that there is an essential need for an effective mechanism to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of article X. There should be no hindrance to peaceful activities.

Non-proliferation efforts through export controls can best be addressed by multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory guidelines, with a view to preserving the integrity and balance of the Convention. Therefore, national implementation measures should not create undue restrictions on the peaceful transfer of scientific knowledge, related technology, equipment and materials among States parties. The eighth Review Conference is the appropriate forum to adopt specific decisions and recommendations in that regard. We also wish to underline the importance of the full, comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention, as well as its universality.

We would emphasize that the promotion of international cooperation as provided for under article X and the removal of arbitrary and politically motivated denials should be squarely addressed in the Meetings of States Parties, and an action plan consisting of practical and concrete measures to strengthen the implementation of the article should be developed, as that is the best way to reinforce the Convention.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction". The Committee will now begin its discussion on the cluster "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

Mr. Isnomo (Indonesia): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) on the theme of the disarmament aspects of outer space.

NAM recognizes the common interest of all humankind and the sovereign rights of all States in the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and emphasizes that the prevention

of an arms race in outer space, including a ban on deploying or using weapons therein, would avert a grave danger for international peace and security.

The abrogation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems brought about new challenges to strategic stability and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. NAM remains seriously concerned about the negative security consequences of the deployment of strategic missile defence systems, which could trigger an arms race.

NAM remains concerned about developments related to anti-ballistic missile systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space. NAM reiterates its call for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which remains a priority. In that regard, NAM reaffirms that the exploration and use of outer space should be for peaceful purposes only and for the benefit of all States, irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development.

NAM reaffirms its position that the elaboration of any code of conduct for outer space activities should be consistent with the respective mandates of all the relevant United Nations bodies and should be held in the format of inclusive, transparent and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, based on a proper and unequivocal mandate, without specific deadlines. The drafting of a code of conduct should take into account the interests of all States, irrespective of their level of development. That would help to bring about a balanced outcome that addresses the needs and reflects the concerns of all participants.

NAM calls for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach within the United Nations to the issue of missiles. Any initiative on this subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their right to the peaceful uses of space technologies.

NAM emphasizes that space science and technology and their applications — such as satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies — provide indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development. They can also contribute more effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries, conserve natural resources and enhance preparedness

for, and the mitigation of, the consequences of disasters. In that regard, and while underlining the importance of the availability of space science and technology to all interested countries, NAM stresses that they should be utilized in accordance with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the promotion of international peace and security.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia) (*spoke in Russian*): I am honoured today to speak on behalf of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), namely, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia, on agenda item 95, entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”.

The member States of the CSTO share the concern of the international community with respect to the possibility of an arms race in outer space. We remain committed to the goals of keeping outer space free of weapons and ensuring its further use for exclusively peaceful purposes. We consider that this issue can be addressed only through the conclusion of a legally binding document. The basis for such a document could be the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of use of force or the threat of the use of force against outer space objects, an updated version of which was introduced by the Russian Federation and China at the Conference on Disarmament in June 2014. We call upon States to join forces in favour of the early commencement of negotiations on this document at the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. González Vivas (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am making this statement on behalf of the member States of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The members of UNASUR share an interest in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of all States and for all humankind. The world in which we live depends heavily on the resources found in space, which provide essential services in various areas.

The member States of UNASUR share the view that cooperation on an equitable basis is essential for the transfer and development of space technologies in order to develop national capacities in this field and to create

opportunities for the use of science and technology for sustainable and inclusive development.

Equal access to the peaceful uses of outer space should be guaranteed in order to ensure that its benefits are made available to all humankind. In that regard, the members of UNASUR view cooperation as a key element for the countries of the region. It should thus be promoted as a fundamental pillar for the peaceful uses of outer space. Consequently, we are committed to improving the multilateral legal framework that governs the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure outer space environment. Therefore, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a matter of urgency.

UNASUR members believe that it is in the interest of the international community to begin negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prevent the deployment of any type of weapon in outer space. The imminent danger posed by the lack of a sufficient legal basis to address the problem of weapons in space is widely recognized. In that context, the revised proposal regarding a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space, presented by Russia and China, represents a positive development for the beginning of negotiations.

Allow me to recall that the prevention of an arms race in outer space has been a part of our agenda for a long time. More than 30 years ago, the General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Despite some concrete exchanges between 1985 and 1994, the lack of consensus since then has prevented the Conference from duly considering this fundamental issue.

The members of UNASUR recognize that the adoption of transparency and confidence-building measures can promote mutual understanding, political dialogue and cooperation among States. In that regard, we reiterate our appreciation for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), established by resolution 65/68. We thank the Group for recognizing that transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities can serve as a basis for the consideration of concepts and proposals leading to legally binding obligations.

In addition, the members of UNASUR have been following with keen interest the deliberations, which concluded last July, on a possible international code of conduct governing activities in outer space, sponsored by the European Union. While we value the work carried out by the European Union, we believe that the initiative would require an effective multilateral approach and mandate to be effective.

In the same vein, we welcome the adoption of the resolution entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space” (resolution 69/32) and the resolution entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” (resolution 69/31), which we understand to be significant confidence-building measures relating to outer space. However, although political commitments and voluntary agreements are welcomed, the members of UNASUR reiterate that they cannot replace legally binding measures that impose firm, long-term obligations on all States.

While expressing our ongoing concern about the possibility of the emergence of an arms race in outer space, we reiterate our call on all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to provide the necessary conditions for the prompt adoption of a programme of work that includes the establishment of a working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, thereby paving the way for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent the stationing of weapons in outer space. Political will is needed to overcome this situation.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country has the great honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Group of Arab States is firmly convinced of the importance of limiting outer space to peaceful uses only. The international treaties aimed at preventing the weaponization of outer space have each played a positive role in strengthening the use, particularly the peaceful use, of outer space, which is the common heritage of humankind. All activities in that area should take place under the aegis of the United Nations in order to guarantee the principles of equality, universality and international consensus within this essential framework. Any attempt to regulate activities in that area should be under a code of conduct or an international treaty to strengthen the regime and governance of outer space for the benefit of all countries in the world. Therefore,

we should not ban or obstruct the integral right of any State to use outer space in a peaceful manner.

We would like to reiterate the need to maintain outer space as a universal peaceful area exempt from any war or dispute. It is therefore important that no weapons be deployed there, whether for protection, defence or aggression. We also seek the establishment of an international mechanism that could prohibit the stationing and use of weapons in outer space.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the importance of technological exchange in this area based on the necessary technical cooperation and related technical assistance. We would also like to take into account the various capacities of countries in order to incorporate developing countries into the system of countries that engage in activities and use applications in outer space.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Bylica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 28 member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its member States have a long-standing position in favour of the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space is in our common interest and is a key priority for us. The European Union's goal is therefore to promote international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Furthermore, we are convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures can make a contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. To that end, we proposed in 2012 a non-legally binding international code of conduct for outer space activities. Since then we have seen only an increase in the use and uses of outer space. Space assets operated by an increasing number of

governmental and non-governmental entities offer the world enormous benefits that were unimaginable just a few decades ago.

Today those benefits are encumbered by significant challenges stemming from dangerous orbital debris, and thus the potential of destructive collisions, the crowding of satellites, the growing saturation of the radio frequency spectrum, as well as the threat of deliberate disruption or destruction of satellites. Those challenges call for the serious and timely involvement of States to ensure greater safety, security and sustainability in outer space.

The EU continues to believe that a non-legally binding international code of conduct for activities in outer space would be an important contribution to the safety, security and sustainability of the outer space environment. Such a code of conduct could constitute a first step in strengthening the international framework for outer space, which could also include other instruments of both a non-legally binding and legally binding nature.

The meeting convened at Headquarters in July upon the initiative of the EU, with the assistance of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, entitled "Multilateral Negotiations on an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities", was very well attended, with delegations from 109 States and 8 inter- and non-governmental organizations. We regret that, after so many years of consultations, the negotiations could not commence thereafter, but we are confident that the rich and substantial discussions in New York on both the substance and the process will help the international community to finally move forward.

Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict is essential to safeguarding the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes. The European Union remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Therefore, all EU member States voted last year in favour of resolution 69/31, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

However, in our view, the updated draft of the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects does not represent the basis for substantive work on the subject in the Conference on Disarmament. A new legally binding instrument would

need to be comprehensive, precise and verifiable. With regard to the initiative on no first placement of weapons in outer space, we are equally concerned that it does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence among States.

The annual consensus resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, co-sponsored by all EU member States, underlines the international community's shared sense of urgency about, and responsibility for, preserving, outer space for the peaceful use of all humankind. The EU is ready to contribute to efforts in that regard.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am pleased to take this opportunity to address today the First Committee's thematic debate on outer space. The United States has often expressed its commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability, stability, safety and security of the space environment. Addressing the issues associated with orbital congestion, collision avoidance and responsible and peaceful behaviour in space are the responsibilities of all parties that engage in space activities. How we address those pressing challenges facing the international community today is an important question that has arisen in discussions within the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and elsewhere.

In considering options for international cooperation to ensure space security and sustainability, some nations would prefer to pursue a legally binding arms-control agreement, such as the June 2014 draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, submitted by Russia and China to the CD. The United States continues to believe that the document is fundamentally flawed and cannot form the basis for negotiations in Geneva. As we have provided our views on the draft treaty many times, we will not repeat them here.

The United States continues to be particularly concerned about the continued development and testing of destructive anti-satellite systems. Contrary to the advocacy by some States for arms-control measures to prevent the use of force against space objects, the development of such capabilities by some of those same States could trigger dangerous misinterpretations and miscalculations and could be escalatory in a crisis or conflict. The United States believes that testing debris-generating anti-satellite systems threatens

international security and economic well-being, along with threatening the legitimate civil and scientific space endeavours of all nations.

In contrast to the approach advocated by some States to pursue protracted negotiations to conclude a legally binding instrument, the United States is convinced that many outer space challenges confronting us could be addressed through practical, near-term initiatives, such as the non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). Such pragmatic measures are either already being implemented unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally, or could be developed and implemented in the future by nations.

As others have discussed in this forum and in yesterday's joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees (see A/C.1/70/PV.13), the 2012/2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189) endorsed voluntary, non-legally binding TCBMs to strengthen stability in space and encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, space. The report's recommendations were endorsed by the full General Assembly in resolutions 68/50 and 69/38, both of which the United States co-sponsored with Russia and China, as well as a draft resolution that will be considered this year in the First Committee (A/C.1/70/L.48).

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts also established criteria for the development of outer space TCBMs. In applying those criteria, United States experts, along with a number of the Group's experts from other countries, have noted that some TCBM proposals — such as Russia's initiative for States to make declarations of no first placement of weapons in outer space — fail to satisfy the Group's criteria. In the view of the United States, that proposal does not adequately define what constitutes a weapon in outer space, would not enable effective confirmation by other States of a State's political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space, and focuses exclusively on space-based weapons and overlooks the most pressing threat to outer-space systems, namely, terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons.

To date, the initiative's proponents have not explained how the no first placement initiative would be consistent with the Group's TCBM criteria, or how such an initiative would enhance stability in space when it

is silent with regard to terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons. In contrast, other TCBMs do meet the Group's criteria — for example, developing guidelines for space-flight safety and debris mitigation, providing collision-avoidance notifications and being transparent about national space policies and national security space strategies. Such notifications, coordination and exchanges not only improve awareness, but also increase transparency by mitigating the risk of mishaps, misperceptions and mistrust. The United States is already implementing such TCBMs and encourages other nations to do the same.

I would like to conclude by saying that if we are serious about sustaining the outer-space environment for future generations, then we must address the challenges facing us today by working together to develop and implement pragmatic measures, rather than pursuing approaches that are unlikely to be timely, equitable or effective.

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak on this item on the First Committee's agenda.

We support the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia and Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Arab States, respectively.

This subject is of great importance to us in the light of the direct effect outer space has on international peace and security and on the daily lives of all people on the planet. Outer space belongs to all of humankind, and it plays a very important role in our lives and in our economies. Scientific inquiry and development have strengthened this importance, which is why we need to operate in an atmosphere of transparency and confidence-building for the benefit of all countries and nations.

Algeria wants to use outer space for its economic interests and considers it to be a shared human heritage whose use for peaceful purposes will strengthen international cooperation in accordance with the principles dictated by international law and treaties. These include the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies; and resolution 1884 (XVIII), of 17 October 1963, calling upon States to refrain from placing in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction

or from installing such weapons on celestial bodies; and resolution 1962 (XVIII), of 13 December 1963, entitled "Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space".

An arms race in outer space could have dangerous consequences, including negative effects on the socioeconomic life of countries. In that respect, we support the working document submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement in 2015, when that group expressed its concern with regard to the issue of weapons in outer space, which could pose dangers to all of humankind.

Like many other countries, Algeria deems that current legal system suffers from lacunae and is inadequate to prevent an arms race. We must therefore work together in the Conference on Disarmament to remedy the problem. In that regard, we welcome the Russian initiative to monitor outer space activities. We also welcome resolution 69/38. My country has taken note of the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities and its report (see A/68/189) on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures recommendations, pursuant to resolution 65/62. We have also taken note of the draft code of conduct aimed at establishing transparency in activities in outer space and at governing future activities. It would also allow for the establishment of a legally binding treaty that could regulate the activities of States in outer space in order to respond to all concerns of the developing countries.

Ms. Janjua (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement under this cluster.

For over three decades, the international community has continued to make efforts to avert the weaponization of outer space. The final document of the tenth special session (resolution S-10/2) contains more than 30 paragraphs that speak to the dangers and urgency of preventing an arms race in its various aspects. Paragraph 80 of that document specifically recommends undertaking appropriate international negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) has long been seized of this issue, and the General Assembly has

recognized for over two decades that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger to international peace and security.

Space is no longer considered to be an exclusive preserve of a few developed States. Today, developing countries are tapping into space technology in diverse areas, ranging from meteorology and disaster management to the economy and telecommunications. Their reliance on space technology will grow further in the years to come, but this time the developing countries will neither carry the burden of non-proliferation nor accept any discriminatory restrictions that hamper their peaceful pursuit in outer space. The only answer is equal responsibility.

There is a growing use of outer space by numerous States, for civilian and military purposes alike, and that enhances the potential for and risk of its weaponization. The development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and their integration into space assets have added a worrying dimension to issues relating to outer space. An arms race in and the weaponization of outer space would not only endanger its peaceful uses, but would also aggravate the intensity of conflicts on Earth, with potentially disastrous consequences for international peace and security. It is therefore imperative for the international community to preclude the possibility of weaponizing outer space now. Further delay will be counterproductive. Let us avoid the mistakes made in the case of chemical weapons, which witnessed decades of production before the Chemical Weapons Convention was concluded.

The rapid growth and change in space technologies have widened gaps in the existing international regime pertaining to outer space, including the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and the Moon Treaty of 1984. While the Outer Space Treaty prohibits the placement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space, it is silent on the deployment of other types of weapons, including conventional weapons. Those gaps need to be filled by a new legal instrument. It is against that backdrop that Pakistan has consistently opposed the weaponization of outer space and called for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on that contemporary issue of interest and concern.

There is a considerable body of existing knowledge on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Much work was done from 1985 to 1992 in the Conference on Disarmament by the Ad Hoc Committees on the

subject. Moreover, the draft text commonly known as the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, submitted jointly by the Russian Federation and China in 2008 and updated in 2014, also provides a useful basis on which to commence negotiations. We therefore see no impediment in starting negotiations on such an important issue for international peace and security.

Despite the growing dangers of weaponization in outer space and its attendant repercussions on international peace and security, several States continue to oppose the commencement of negotiations on that issue in the Conference on Disarmament. There can be no other explanation for such opposition other than that those States seek to protect their monopoly on that technology and to maintain their full-spectrum dominance. On the other hand, there has been a growing lament expressed over the CD's deadlock over the past five years. Some States have found it convenient to attribute that stalemate to one of the four core issues on the CD's agenda.

Facts speak for themselves, and one inconvenient fact is that, despite overwhelming support for negotiating a legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the CD has been prevented by a handful of States from doing so. The international community must therefore ask for a clear expression of the underlying reasons that oblige those States to oppose negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have not heard a convincing case from those States as to how negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space would negatively affect their security interests. In any case, those States should acknowledge their responsibility in perpetuating the deadlock in the CD.

Aside from efforts directed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space and transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (TCBMs), anti-ballistic missile systems, although inherently destabilizing and of dubious effectiveness at present, can have wide-ranging implications for regional and international security and stability. Therefore, it is essential to redouble efforts to develop a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory agreement that addresses concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of anti-ballistic missile systems.

Even though Pakistan did not have the opportunity to be part of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, we take note of its consensus report and recommendations (see A/68/189). We agree that TCBMs should be aimed at increasing the security, safety and sustainability of outer space. We particularly welcome the Group's recommendation to further develop international cooperation between spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all States. We recognize the value of TCBMs and non-legally binding codes of conduct in promoting trust among States. While we see value in such efforts, we also believe that such initiatives should be pursued in an inclusive, universal and participatory manner, taking into account the security interests of all States. However, those voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for legally binding, treaty-based obligations.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement made earlier by the European Union. I would like to make a few additional comments in my national capacity.

France is particularly committed to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Outer space opens the door to many potential benefits for our economies and societies, with major spin-offs in the areas of telecommunications, land, air and sea navigation, meteorology and climate. France is therefore determined to endeavour to guarantee the long-term security and viability of space activities, which is key to the economic growth and development of an increasing number of countries. We must prevent the deterioration of the conditions for using space if we wish to extend the benefit of space applications, especially to developing countries, and to preserve access to space for future generations while continuing to expand our knowledge of it. A collective response is needed to that end.

Increasing demands are being made on space. Space now faces a number of challenges, such as the proliferation of space debris and the growing risk of collision or interference. Unfortunately, such risks may also result from intentional acts, such as the deliberate destruction of objects in space. Existing mechanisms are not sufficient to prevent such events. That is why, in response to these challenges, priority must be given to ensuring the viability and security of space-based activities.

France believes that the international community's response to these challenges should be based on several elements. First, the development of activities in outer space should take place in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles recognized by international law. Secondly, the problems we face are security issues in the broad sense, which call for a comprehensive response that covers both civilian and military aspects. Thirdly, the rapid deterioration of the space environment calls for urgent and pragmatic responses. That is why we would prefer in the near term a response based on the promotion of responsible practices and the elaboration of voluntary transparency and confidence-building measures. We should aim for flexible mechanisms for coordination and consultation. The added value of such transparency and confidence-building measures is emphasized in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189), adopted by consensus in 2014. France was a full participant in the Group.

The plan to develop an international code of conduct for outer space activities addresses the need for both a cross-cutting approach and transparency and confidence-building measures. France welcomes the interest in this initiative reflected in the level of engagement and the substantive discussions that have taken place in recent years. France also supports the ongoing reflections aimed at capitalizing on the discussions that took place in New York in July.

France shares the objective of avoiding an arms race in outer space. Therefore, the elaboration of instruments and the development of initiatives intended to meet that objective should, in principle, be possible within the framework of an agreed and prioritized programme of work at the Conference on Disarmament. We take note of existing efforts to promote discussions within the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe a legally binding instrument would have to fulfil several criteria. In particular, it should resolve the difficult question of defining what constitutes a weapon in space, which is something we have not been able to agree on for many years, and which should be both sufficiently comprehensive and precise. Such an instrument should be based on a robust and appropriate verification mechanism. And, finally, any legally binding agreement should be reflected in a real gain in

security terms, that is, it should be based on effective and credible measures.

In all events, we consider that the intrinsic characteristics of space activities call for a comprehensive and cross-cutting response, and we welcome the joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees held yesterday (see A/C.1/70/PV.13). We hope another such joint meeting will be held, in order to give fresh impetus to these discussions.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and of Uruguay on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

The sustained development of outer space offers humankind unlimited potential to make progress in education, medicine, risk management and natural disaster prevention, agriculture, telecommunications and science and technology, among others, hence the immense importance of working together to ensure the development of activities with peaceful purposes in outer space and to prevent its militarization.

We emphasize that an armed conflict in outer space would have devastating consequences on our lives on Planet Earth and would destroy the prospects of the development of space activities and their potential for humankind. Unfortunately, such an armed conflict is not as distant as we might think. The development of satellites and other technologies for military purposes has increased. Certain dual-use satellites that are used for telecommunications and terrestrial observation can be and sometimes are used for purposes that are not entirely peaceful. To this is added the fact that some States have developed and tested anti-satellite systems and certain missile defence technologies that could be used to attack objects in outer space. That being the case, the potential militarization of outer space is becoming increasingly worrisome, making its prevention and prohibition a matter of increasing urgency.

Venezuela welcomes the work done by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. Venezuela also takes notes of the European Union proposal on an international code of conduct for outer space activities. All initiatives intended to promote transparency and build confidence among States with

regard to the development of activities in outer space represent a step in the right direction. However, none of these initiatives can replace the imperative need to achieve a multilateral legally binding instrument to prevent the militarization of outer space. In that regard, we stress the need for progress in the negotiation of a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, on the basis of the draft treaty introduced by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament or within the framework of another relevant multilateral forum of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the exploration and use of outer space provide opportunities for all nations, regardless of their degree of economic or scientific development, and should be the heritage of humankind. We must therefore progress together in strengthening its peaceful use and agree as soon as possible on a multilateral, legally binding instrument that guarantees to all countries the possibility of a peaceful outer space, from which everyone can derive benefits for the well-being and the development of their peoples.

Mr. Hansen (Australia): Australia welcomes the increased attention that has been paid to the subject of space security in the past few years, including yesterday's useful joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees (see A/C.1/70/PV.13).

Modern society has become reliant on space for positioning, navigation, timing, communications, earth observation and other space-enabled services. As our collective reliance on space-based technology grows, so does the importance that we preserve the long-term sustainability and security of the space environment as a common good.

The key challenge that we all face now is preventing the proliferation of space debris. Space debris is not a hypothetical problem. The odds that the space domain will be rendered unusable for human endeavour will increase over time if nothing is done to reduce space debris now. Science and industry experts argue that we may soon arrive at a tipping point. Beyond that tipping point, reducing space debris will become prohibitively costly and difficult.

Australia is actively contributing to international efforts to establish transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space as a way to address the threat of space debris. We encourage States to implement the 2013 consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building

Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189). We also strongly supported the development of a code of conduct to secure consensus on the norms that will facilitate outer space activities. While there appears to be no agreement yet on how to settle and implement a code, we remain committed to the codifying effort. The level of support for the code shown at yesterday's joint session is a positive signal for continuing this important work. These concrete steps would ensure all countries have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of space and minimize the threats, notably of space debris.

These are pressing issues for our own dynamic Indo-Pacific region. We applaud the continued efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum to raise awareness and grow capacity to respond to the space debris challenge. We look forward to participating in the third ASEAN Regional Forum Space Security Workshop, to be co-chaired by Laos, China and Russia in Shanghai in December. Australia was proud to initiate and co-chair with Viet Nam the inaugural Space Security Workshop in 2012.

In this context, I would like to raise Australia's ongoing concern about the development and testing of anti-satellite missiles. Anti-satellite weapons have the potential to create vast amounts of space debris that endanger all space assets and space-enabled services upon which all countries rely. Even if such missiles do not engage a target, their testing and deployment run counter to the international community's efforts to build transparency and confidence around space activities. Any initiatives that seek to deal with the issue of non-weaponization of space or to discourage the threat of force against space objects, should include in their scope ground-based anti-satellite weapons. We see anti-satellite weapons as constituting the most pressing threat to space infrastructure and regard addressing that concern as a key requirement for any space security initiative.

In conclusion, Australia urges the international community to focus on the practical and achievable steps we can take together to address the real threats to our space activities, particularly orbital debris.

Mr. Saito (Japan): As this is my first time taking the floor in the First Committee, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee.

While a growing number of nations enjoy the economic, social and national security benefits of the

use of outer space, there are negative aspects to this trend as well. A rise in the number of satellites has led to congestion in space and a greater pool of space debris, which pose the risk of severely impairing the functioning of satellites through a collision or crash. This trend is a serious concern for all nations with regard to the stable utilization of outer space.

For example, if the functioning of satellites declines as a result of space debris collisions, that could lead to a serious disruption in the prevention of disasters or safe operations of transportation, such as railway, ships and aeroplanes, as well as of equipment playing key roles in the national security apparatus. In this context, damaging behaviour — such as anti-satellite attacks, which generate a large amount of space debris — is of great concern to the international community.

Therefore, enhancing international efforts that aim to examine a possible measure to effectively prohibit the destruction of satellites and to assure peaceful and sustainable uses of outer space is a matter of significance. Japan will proactively pursue partnerships with other nations on realizing and reinforcing the rule of law in outer space. In particular, we have been actively promoting efforts with the international community to formulate an international code of conduct for outer space activities, which analyses several measures to prevent the further creation of space debris and any action that directly or indirectly damages or disrupts space objects. On the other hand, with regard to the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, which is presented by Russia and China, we recognize that there are a number of issues that need to be carefully examined for its consideration.

I would like to conclude my statement by emphasizing the need to add measures to mitigate space debris as an issue for future consideration. Space debris is an actual threat to any type of entity conducting any kind of activity in space. Japan will intensify its efforts in the field of space situational awareness and in developing space debris removal technology.

I have stated on the record Japan's basic plan on its space policy. Japan is committed to securing a safe space environment.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The use of outer space has become increasingly varied and more crucial to the development, economy and security of States. Applied space technologies are found in almost all sectors of agricultural planning, finance,

support for military activities and national security. Outer space has become an environment of primary importance to a growing number of States. At present, the development of anti-satellite weapons and of the capacity to interfere in space systems persists and is increasing. It would therefore seem crucial to identify and understand the new challenges presented by the use of outer space.

In response to these developments, Switzerland believes that the international legal framework should be strengthened in order to maintain security and stability in outer space and ensure that we can continue to use it in the long term. The development of different types of legally and politically binding international instruments is complementary and promotes a gradual approach to the need for new regulation of space. Switzerland opposes the use of force against space systems and the placement of weapons in space because it must remain free of any conflict and usable by all States. Switzerland is particularly concerned about the use of weapons in outer space, which generates debris and could render orbits unusable for many generations. Switzerland supports the development of legally binding standards to address those issues.

A first step in the process of regulating outer space could be for States to adopt and implement transparency and confidence-building measures, for example on the basis of those proposed by the Group of Governmental Experts, which examined the issue in 2012 and 2013 (see A/68/189). Resolution 68/50 delegated the analysis of the implementation of the Group's proposals to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The COPUOS began its work comparing the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts with the guidelines that it is currently developing in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The CD, for its part, could focus on the recommendations that relate to military matters and encourage their implementation by States.

Outer space is a common heritage of humankind whose use has become essential to the well-being of us all, but because of its physical characteristics it is also extremely fragile. The use of force in space or against space systems may be exercised only in accordance with the international legal framework, including the Charter of the United Nations. However, any armed combat in space could have catastrophic repercussions,

and every effort should be undertaken to protect the space environment and prevent any such a conflict from taking place there.

To move forward on this issue, we consider it necessary now to define a common understanding of what actually constitutes a use of force in space or against a spatial system. Moreover, the ban should not merely concern the use of weapons in space or against space systems. In our opinion, the ban should also concern the development and testing of such weapons, especially as regards the anti-satellite weapons capable of generating space debris. The space community and the disarmament community must work in a coherent and coordinated fashion on cross-cutting issues relating to the safety, security and sustainability of space activities.

In this regard, we very much welcome the holding on 22 October of a joint meeting between the First and Fourth Committees, which allowed for some interesting exchanges of views between the two communities. Switzerland hopes that there will be opportunities that would provide a framework for the two communities to discuss and address these issues in the near future. The United Nations, for example, could provide an adequate framework for the further development of an international code of conduct for outer space activities based on the draft proposed by the European Union.

A number of international initiatives dealing with space-related matters face obstruction or are threatened by it. We are entering a crucial stage in which, if we do not collectively show a constructive and pragmatic attitude, many of these initiatives could fail. Yet the broad participation in each of these initiatives is proof that the measures are deemed necessary by many States for the purposes of ensuring that outer space remains usable for future generations in the long term.

Mr. Ji Hao Jun (China): China has all along advocated the peaceful use of outer space and actively engaged in international exchange and cooperation to this end. To date, China has conducted satellite launches for more than 10 countries. The successful launch of the seventeenth satellite of the Beidou Positioning System in March 2015 marked the start of the global outreach of the Beidou system. China has participated actively in international cooperative efforts under the framework of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and that of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization. China's tireless

efforts to promote the peaceful use of outer space are widely acknowledged.

As a result of rapid development of space technology and the growing number of spacefaring nations, the space environment is increasingly deteriorating in the face of evident risks caused by orbital congestion and space debris. As natural results of space exploration, these risks can be mitigated through cooperative efforts of the international community. At the same time, given the temptation to achieve strategic advantage provided by military space capability, the growing tendency towards space weaponization is having a great impact on space security and the international strategic architecture. This poses a very serious threat to space security.

The international community shares the consensus that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the prevention of weaponization of and a subsequent arms race in space serve the common interests of all countries. This consensus is manifest in the adoption by an overwhelming majority of the resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space annually since 1994.

Unequivocally opposing space weaponization and an arms race in space, China has been an active participant in the multilateral arms-control process on space security. In 2008, China and Russia jointly proposed a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects and put forward an updated version last June. We value comments and suggestions made by some countries and have studied them carefully. Taking into consideration these comments and recent developments in space security, we have recently put forward a feedback working paper to the Conference on Disarmament to address relevant concerns. We call on all countries to work for more convergence and to start multilateral negotiations on an arms control treaty aimed at effectively maintaining space safety and security.

China and Russia introduced a draft resolution on no first placement of weapons in outer space in the First Committee, which was adopted by a large majority of countries (resolution 69/32). This once again reflects the common call of the international community for the prevention of weaponization in space. The adoption of the resolution was of great importance to the multilateral arms control process on space security. We

hope more countries will extend their support to the draft resolution this year (A/C.1/70/L.47).

China is of the view that appropriate and feasible transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) could contribute to enhancing mutual confidence, reducing misinterpretations and regulating space activities. They can also complement the process of the prevention of weaponization and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, given their intrinsic limitations, TCBMs cannot replace the negotiation of a legally binding arms control treaty.

In 2013, the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities concluded its work with a balanced report (see A/68/189), which is an authoritative instrument and could serve as an important basis for future work on TCBMs. It also has to be stressed that countries are at different stages of developing space capability. As a result, their concerns and their readiness to embrace certain TCBMs vary widely. Only when discussions are conducted on an equal footing and in an open manner, with gaps of development taken into account, can TCBMs emerging from these discussions be implemented smoothly and effectively.

China took part in the international code of conduct for outer space activities meeting held in New York in late July. We took note that many participating countries expressed their concerns on procedural and substantive matters alike. We call on sponsors of the code of conduct to take on board these concerns and pursue negotiations under the framework of the United Nations and through a United Nations mandate in an equitable, open and transparent manner, so that the code of conduct could accommodate concerns of all relevant stakeholders, be effective and win wider support.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the missile defence systems deployed by some countries on a global scale are the broadest ground-based system with anti-satellite capability. I admire some countries' courage in self-criticism. We call on these countries to stop the deployment of such missile defence systems so as to pave the way for an early start of negotiations on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

China will continue to work with the international community and make its due contribution to space security and sustainability.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The militarization of outer space is a threat to the future of the human species. It is our responsibility to take all necessary measures to ensure the strictly peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of the scientific and economic development of all States. We support the legitimate right of all States to have access to outer space under equal conditions and without discrimination.

Cuba has formally committed to not be the first country to deploy weapons of any kind in space. Moreover, Cuba is fully committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is necessary to continue strengthening the legal regime on outer space to guarantee security and transparency in space activities. We strongly support the adoption of a treaty for the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against satellites or other space objects. The draft treaty submitted by Russia and China in the Conference on Disarmament is, in the opinion of Cuba, a good basis for negotiations.

The adoption of international transparency and confidence-building measures on outer space is appropriate and necessary, particularly since the above-mentioned treaty has not been adopted. Such measures must be discussed and agreed upon within the framework of the United Nations, with the participation and consensus of its Member States. These processes should not be governed by predetermined deadlines. Any code of conduct or similar confidence-building measure that is proposed must leave no ambiguity with regard to the prohibition of the placement of any kind of weapon in outer space.

Regrettably, outer space is already a crowded place, and that largely is largely due to the extensive network of existing spy satellites used to obtain information to the detriment of some nations and not for the benefit of humankind. The problem of space debris and its possible collision with space objects is one of the most serious problems affecting activities in space. We believe that the future of space activities depends largely on reducing such debris.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the need for effective cooperation among States, without discrimination, to achieve an optimal and responsible use of the unlimited possibilities offered by space research and applications for present and future generations.

Mr. Al Huwaila (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to align itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Applied science and technology related to outer space, such as Earth observation systems, satellite navigation technology and telecommunications, represent an important contribution to efforts aimed at promoting development everywhere in the world, because those sciences play a role in providing the means necessary to improve people's lives, preserve our natural resources, and predict natural disasters and mitigate their destructive impacts. This has significantly and effectively contributed to finding long-term solutions in the area of sustainable development. Accordingly, outer space has become necessary for modern life.

On that basis, Kuwait acknowledges that the ideal use of outer space is not possible except through multilateral efforts governed by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace and security. Those efforts must not focus on regulating the peaceful uses of outer space, but must encompass a broader scope in order to ensure a universal and participatory environment that does not include unilateral measures and that prevents an arms race in outer space, which would be gravely dangerous for modern life. We must also establish an international environment based on trust and confidence, especially because there are gaps in the international legal instruments.

We must implement the existing treaties, such as the 1963 Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, and the Moon Treaty of 1979. However, none of those will prevent an arms race in outer space. In this context, Kuwait reaffirms that it is necessary to begin seriously negotiating a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and legally binding international instrument to prevent the placement of any weapons in outer space. We also support the establishment of a committee in the Conference on Disarmament to address this important issue in a balanced manner.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union earlier. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Conscious of the increasing reliance of human endeavour on the use of outer space, we place utmost

importance in ensuring that, in the interest of all, outer space continues to be used peacefully and in addressing potential escalation dynamics and the security risks that these might entail. We feel a sense of urgency in this respect.

While space capabilities are critical not only to the economy but also to national security, the main challenge today is the growing spectrum of threats against space objects. Italy notes that threats to the space environment will also increase as more nations and non-State actors develop and deploy counterspace systems, such as jamming, ground site attackers, lasers, kinetic energy attacks, direct-ascent anti-satellite technologies and orbital anti-satellite weapons.

Italy believes that a first step towards achieving more safety and security in outer space activities, as well as their sustainability, is the adoption and implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures. For this reason, we support the concrete implementation of the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), aimed at reducing the risks of misunderstandings and miscommunication, as well as helping ensure strategic stability. Such voluntary measures, complementary to the existing international framework, would benefit and preserve the use of outer space, particularly in the interest of emerging space actors. The consensus in the Group of Governmental Experts sent indeed a strong message: States must remain committed to enhancing the welfare of humankind by cooperating with others to maintain the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment.

In this context, our attention has primarily focused on the European Union-led proposal of an international code of conduct. The code should be a pragmatic instrument, based on a preventive approach, to foster international cooperation in outer space in order to enhance its safety, security and sustainability to the benefit of both spacefaring and non-spacefaring countries. It should be comprehensive in its scope, taking into account that peaceful activities in outer space, by their very nature, could serve both civilian and military purposes. We also believe that its implementation can provide the momentum for the creation of reinforced legal frameworks in the longer term, paving the way for more stringent and legally binding rules.

For these reasons, we regret that the 109 States represented in New York last July could not start negotiating the draft code. At the same time, we highly value the useful elements derived from the debate and we are confident that these will foster further positive developments. We are aware that a voluntary code of conduct cannot provide a solution for all pending issues regarding outer space. Therefore, we welcome and will continue to be engaged in all efforts to develop arms control or other specific measures aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, particularly in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has long held the view that outer space is a part of the common heritage of humankind and all humankind should have an equal opportunity to explore and utilize it for peaceful purposes and for the common benefit of humankind through cooperation.

The human race has long suffered due to the arms race in land, sea and air. Outer space must not be another arena for an arms race. All countries — those that have and those that do not have technological capacity to launch orbital objects — will be affected by the grave consequences that would arise in the case of an arms race in outer space. In addition, the deployment of weapons in outer space could seriously threaten the security of outer space assets and has the potential to harm the Earth's biosphere and give rise to the phenomenon of space debris.

Sri Lanka considers that while space exploration and the utilization of outer space and its environment offer ample opportunities to humankind, they also bestow on space actors the responsibility to preserve the space environment free from conflict and to prevent it from becoming an arena for the arms race. Sri Lanka recognizes that the existing legal framework on outer space needs to be strengthened, since the political climate concerning outer space sustainability and security has changed drastically. We find that the space environment has become increasingly congested due to increased space activities. Further, militarization and the potential weaponization of the space environment have underlined the danger of outer space becoming a contested area and a source of future conflict.

Sri Lanka, as a responsible member of the global community, has always supported all initiatives aimed at preserving peace, preventing conflict and ensuring sustainability in the outer space environment.

We believe that the conclusion of an international agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space would contribute to averting a catastrophic effect on humankind. With this objective, Sri Lanka has presented, together with Egypt, draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.3, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which calls for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of a legally binding international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Sri Lanka is of the view that the Conference on Disarmament should commence, without delay, substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Sri Lanka also believes that the use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency, confidence-building measures and better information on the part of the international community. Sri Lanka extends its support to the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, whose report (see A/68/189), which was submitted at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, contained a set of substantive transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities that could be considered by States for implementation on a voluntarily basis. Sri Lanka also participated, as a Vice-Chair, in the multilateral negotiations on an international code of conduct for outer space activities organized by the European Union, which was held in New York from 27 to 31 July. Sri Lanka finds that the European Union initiative has offered an opportunity to exchange ideas on the conceptual and substantive issues related to the use of outer space and the safety, security and sustainability issues surrounding the space environment and the mitigation mechanisms to address such issues.

Sri Lanka is ready to work with all parties to contribute to maintaining lasting peace and security in outer space. It is much easier to prevent an arms race from taking place rather than attempting to control it or rolling it back once it has begun.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to express Ecuador's agreement with the statements made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

Ecuador's traditional defence of the peaceful coexistence of all States, in accordance with one of

the fundamental principles of our United Nations, also extends to the use of outer space and the need to guarantee its peaceful use, avoiding the placement of military objects in outer space, and therefore its militarization. My delegation wishes to reaffirm its belief in the need for a legally binding instrument that will preserve the peaceful nature of outer space. For that reason, we have co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.47, committing ourselves to not be the first to place weapons in outer space in order to prevent the start of an arms race.

An arms race in outer space would be very dangerous for international peace and security. Therefore, compliance with existing international norms on the use of outer space in light of universal principles like the banning of the use or the threat of use of force is crucial to prevent that situation. At the same time, we note with interest the presentation by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament of the draft treaty in document CD/1985 to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space.

My country believes that any discussion on proposals relating to outer space, such as a proposed code of conduct, should take place in forums that have the appropriate mandate of the General Assembly. In that respect, we think the sphere of action of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and in particular its Legal Subcommittee, should be respected.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation aligns itself first and foremost with the position of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which has already been presented. We also fully support the opinions and comments expressed here by the representatives of the People's Republic of China and the other countries of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa group, as well as of the States of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represent the opinions of 150 States.

The main issue that we simply must find a response to in the framework of the work of our Committee is the question of whether or not there will be weapons in space. That question is a subject of the work of our Committee. Let us not waver and introduce in the First Committee other issues on space security that are meant to be discussed in the Fourth Committee and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space because several States are not prepared to respond

to the main question before our Committee, which is whether weapons will be placed in outer space or not.

We must recognize the obvious fact that if there is even one State that is truly opposed to any of the international community's efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space, then that State's position should be fully open and understandable to us in the Russian Federation. As it is clearly written in the doctrinal documents of that State that it must dominate all other countries in outer space and, if necessary, use force against the property of other States in outer space, it therefore appears to be a very open position. We must therefore assume that this really exists in our world. Regardless of whether or not we want it, we must deal with it.

We must not forget that, at one time, there were clear agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on the unacceptability of the placement of weapons in outer space. One obstacle to the militarization or weaponization of outer space, as I hope all members know, was the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972. In 2001, the United States of America unilaterally withdrew from that Treaty and thereby opened the possibility of the military use of outer space. No one has said that this will happen tomorrow, but in order to solve all security issues in outer space activities we need to know whether or not it will happen. Everything else depends on the answer to that basic question. Let us be clear. Everything being said by our American colleagues and others members of the NATO military bloc concerning transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space and the code of conduct for outer space activities appears, at the very least, to be insincere.

I recall that immediately after the withdrawal of the United States from the aforementioned Treaty, we and our Chinese friends began the process of developing transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. Every year, we adopt a resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space and, on the basis of one of those resolutions, the European Union proposed the development of a code of conduct for outer space activities. Together with our Chinese colleagues, we have developed a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (CD/1985).

What more can we expect? We are frankly surprised and shocked when our colleagues from Europe and the United States talk about some kind of existing threat of the placement of anti-satellite weapons. Let us then agree that we will not do that and let us have it all written in the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. The wording is all there and there are clear provisions concerning those issues. Therefore, all of these arguments against the draft treaty are simply not sincere.

I believe that there is one very important issue of interest to everyone — the code of conduct for outer space activities. We have worked together with the European Union for many years and drafted an acceptable document. Nevertheless, the United States has insisted that paragraph 4.2 be included in that document. Why? That would destroy the entire document. It therefore enjoys no support —

The Chair: I ask for the kind cooperation of the representative of the Russian Federation in the interest of all of us in sticking to the agreed time limit.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): What a shame. Please allow me just one minute. I simply cannot abridge my statement because I do not write these speeches myself. There is too much of interest going on. I will not further abuse your good relations with me, Sir, but I will just say a few more words.

I invite all States to join the Russian initiative, which many States have already joined, to agree to no first placement of weapons in outer space. If we all agree not to be the first to place weapons in outer space, there will never be any weapons in outer space, and then we will be able to calmly reach agreement on all the remaining issues of concern to us, adopt the relevant resolution or treaty and resolve all issues of the weaponization of outer space, as well as other issues, such as dealing with space debris.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): I begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the manner you, Mr. Chair, are conducting the proceedings of the Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on preventing an arms race in outer space.

Bangladesh favours strengthening the safety, security and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, particularly with regard to their relevance for addressing issues of climate change, agriculture, health and so on. Extensive research and advanced space technology made possible further conquest of outer space, which constitutes a common heritage of humankind. Bangladesh, in line with its principled position, supports the exploration and use of outer space in a transparent manner exclusively for peaceful purposes. States with major space capabilities bear particular responsibility in ensuring the peaceful use of outer space and in preventing an arms race therein. All relevant existing treaties should be strictly complied with, and a ban on the deployment or use of weapons in outer space in the interest of maintaining international peace and security should be considered.

Bangladesh believes that further measures should be taken, with appropriate and effective verification provisions, to prevent an arms race in outer space in view of the increasing threat of its weaponization. That threat of weaponization — including the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies for deployment in outer space — is of much concern to us. It is widely believed that the available legal regime does not in and of itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. That is why we would support an initiative to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness.

In this connection, Bangladesh recommends that the Conference on Disarmament (CD), being the only multilateral disarmament forum, commence negotiations without delay on matters relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in line with resolution 69/31 on the subject. We believe that the draft treaty text on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (CD/1985), submitted to the CD in June 2014, can be a good basis for discussion with a view to adopting an international binding instrument.

In that regard, we note with satisfaction that resolution 65/68, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, adopted by consensus, has already been implemented through the completion of work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities and the adoption of its report (see A/68/189). We also welcome the adoption

of resolution 69/32, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”, as an important step forward towards disarmament in the outer space.

Let me conclude by affirming the immense importance of transparency and confidence-building measures, including a non-legally binding code of conduct among Member States, for preventing an arm race in outer space. But that must not be considered a substitute for a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We should deploy our collective efforts towards such an instrument in order to ensure a peaceful and secure world for coming generations.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to you, Sir, for the effective organization of yesterday's joint meeting involving the First and Fourth Committees on outer space security (see A/C.1/70/PV.13).

My delegation would like to align itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Egypt definitely believes that it is a given that outer space is owned by all humankind equally, which means that outer space is a common asset for humankind as a whole. Accordingly, all sorts of outer space activities have to be addressed and managed under the auspices of the United Nations in order to be inclusive, universal and consensus-based. In that regard, the Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate international forum.

We reiterate that any regulation of outer space should aim at improving the outer space environment for the use of all States. It should not in any way aim to limit the full utilization of outer space activities, applications and exploration by any State. That is the very essence of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

We also reaffirm that outer space must remain free of any potential conflict and should be recognized as a non-conflict zone. We therefore believe that the weaponization of outer space for any purpose — whether offensive or defensive, by any State — must be prevented globally. That is precisely why Egypt and Sri Lanka have

introduced their traditional draft resolution, entitled “Prevention of an arms race in the outer space”, in the First Committee annually for over two decades, aimed at establishing a working group under the Conference on Disarmament agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space as early as possible in the 2016 session and the coming one.

Egypt, as an emerging spacefaring nation and a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, urges the international community to make relevant technical assistance and technological exchange available and fully accessible to all countries around the globe, irrespective of their scientific and economic advancement.

Egypt works in full collaboration with the African Union and the League of Arab States to achieve all the aforementioned objectives of securing outer space and utilizing it for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would also like to clarify our position on outer space (disarmament aspects), one of the major topics on the agenda of the Committee.

Outer space is the common property of humankind, to be explored and used by all States on the basis of equality. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, as a proud spacefaring nation capable of manufacturing and launching satellites on its own, has a great interest in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea continues to concentrate its efforts on the development and utilization of application satellites that are necessary for scientific research and the economic development of the country. At the same time, it is expanding and promoting exchange and cooperation with international space organizations and the space institutions of other countries. That is an exercise of its sovereign right under universal international law on the exploration and use of outer space, as well as an exercise of its legitimate right as a State party to the Outer Space Treaty.

Today, outer space is challenged by potential threats of armed conflict due to the dangerous manoeuvres of a certain country attempting to weaponize outer space. Plans for the weaponization of outer space are being devised and implemented in a blatant manner, triggering an arms race in outer space. Advanced science and

technologies are abused to gain military advantages instead of being oriented to peaceful purposes. Experiments to test new, sophisticated space weapons are conducted regularly. The development of space weapons for prompt strikes at any target on the ground is in full swing. A good example is the deployment of the missile defence systems in combination with space weapons, which the United States of America is pushing ahead with on the pretext of countering ballistic missile threats from a certain country. If such reckless military manoeuvres were justified, global peace and security could never be ensured.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea remains unchanged in its position to oppose the weaponization of outer space. To date, the international community has spared no effort to attain the objective of the prevention of an arms race in and weaponization of outer space. Those efforts led to the establishment of a series of legal regimes and the adoption of some important United Nations resolutions concerning the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, the existing international instruments and regimes are not enough to comprehensively and effectively curb the placement of weapons and an arms race in outer space.

Taking up new, legally binding measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a fundamental prerequisite not only to ensure the equitable and inalienable right of all States to peaceful uses of outer space, but also to maintain the peace and security of the world. In that context, the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is of the view that the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, introduced by Russia and China in 2008 and updated in 2014, could be a good basis for negotiation. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea will always welcome and support any initiative that opposes the placement of weapons in outer space and prevents the weaponization of outer space.

Mr. Ye Gyaw Mra (Myanmar): My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We would like to thank the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in

Outer Space Activities for their insightful presentations at the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees yesterday (see A/C.1/70/PV.13).

Myanmar, like fellow States Members of the United Nations, considers outer space to be the common heritage of humankind. We strongly share the view that outer space must be explored and utilized solely for peaceful purposes in the best interests of all humankind. Transparency and confidence-building measures are a prerequisite for preventing the misuse of outer space and should therefore be vigorously encouraged.

My delegation sincerely holds the view that States with major space-related expertise and capabilities bear the primary responsibility to realize the objective of the peaceful uses and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. All spacefaring nations should refrain from actions that are contrary to that objective.

My delegation, together with other, like-minded delegations, shares the view that the Conference on Disarmament should assume the primary role in the negotiation of an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

Myanmar welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 69/32, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", on 2 December 2014. We are among the sponsors of the two space-related resolutions, namely, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" and "No first placement of weapons in outer space". My delegation will continue to support those two important draft resolutions when the First Committee takes action on them next month.

Mr. Tehrani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Outer space, as the heritage of all humankind, should be kept open to all States for peaceful purposes and to take advantage of the potential benefits therein. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the co-founders of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, has always appreciated and supported international endeavours to promote the peaceful use of outer space and prevent a possible arms race in the realm of humankind's heritage.

In the framework of outer space activities, we should avoid any kind of restriction on promoting the peaceful use of outer space in developing countries with emerging space capabilities. The Islamic Republic of Iran is resolved to enhance its cooperation with the international community in developing, designing

and replicating satellite and launching systems in the context of the sustainability of peaceful activities in outer space. We are fully convinced that outer space should be utilized and explored universally, with equal access for all countries without discrimination, regardless of the level of their scientific, technical and economic development.

On the code of conduct, we believe that discussions should be held in the format of inclusive and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, based on a proper, unequivocal mandate without a specific deadline, and taking into account the interest of all States, irrespective of their level of development, in order to reach a balanced outcome that addresses the needs and reflects the concern of all participants. Such a code should actively promote international cooperation in the uses of outer space for peaceful purposes and should not be discriminatory by including a provision that would in fact establish a threshold limiting the equal rights of developing countries and emerging spacefaring nations to explore and use outer space.

The Chair: I give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): Mr. Chair, my delegation congratulates you as you lead the First Committee. We assure you of our full cooperation in the Committee's vitally important efforts for world peace.

The question of the use of outer space is relatively new in human affairs. The first artificial satellite was launched into orbit around Earth less than 60 years ago. Since then, the use of outer space has grown enormously. Today communications, observation and monitoring satellites play a vital global role in human activity. Global positioning satellites are part of our daily lives, providing locations and giving directions.

At the same time, military interests have led to a troubling search for ways to destroy satellites or render them inoperable. The international community was already aware of the dangers of the militarization of outer space even before the launch of the first artificial Earth satellite into orbit. In fact, efforts at the United Nations to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes began months prior to the launching into orbit of the first satellite in 1957.

Explosions and collisions of orbital components have resulted in the presence of dangerous amounts

of debris in the Earth's atmosphere moving at great velocities, with the potential for deadly collisions with operational satellites, including manned platforms. From time to time, some States have evidently envisioned the deployment in outer space of weapons systems designed to destroy other objects in space or even to launch attacks against targets on the surface of the Earth.

Outer space should be considered a global common good. It makes sense to agree not to take military confrontations between and among States into that environment. States that have not yet done so are encouraged to ratify the Outer Space Treaty in order to reinforce it further and make its provisions more universal, in particular its prohibition of the placement of nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapons of mass destruction in outer space and the prohibition of stationing of such weapons on celestial bodies. Weapons systems acting in space and the testing of weapons in space, however characterized, should be prohibited. The Holy See urges prompt action to initiate and conclude negotiations to that end by acting, *inter alia*, under the agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

The space beyond Earth is also our common home, our common inheritance, a gift for the enjoyment of the whole of humankind. It is therefore of utmost importance to open outer space for scientific and peaceful research for the benefit of us all. The universally useful services that outer space technology provides must be made accessible, as much as possible, to all countries and peoples. While there are reasonable factors that prevent universal access to the beneficial uses of outer space — such as the need for returns on investment for the huge capital costs of exploration, and questions related to patents and intellectual property rights — States must work together to ensure that they benefit humankind as a whole. Indeed, at a time when outer space has become a huge economic asset, we must try to prevent its usefulness becoming yet another cause of increasing economic and social inequalities among individuals and peoples.

It would therefore be best to negotiate a binding legal framework to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes, recognizing that its use for purposes such as communications and observation in support of international security will be accommodated, as has been the case under the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. In the meantime, the adoption of an international code of

conduct for outer space activities should be accomplished promptly. A draft code has been in existence for some time now. The Holy See supports action to complete the steps necessary to adopt an agreed code. My delegation reiterates the importance of action on the code, which would undoubtedly help to prevent an arms race in outer space, and consequently to avert a new, grave threat to international peace and security.

Reaffirming the importance of preventing an arms race in outer space, I state in conclusion the firm conviction of the Holy See that the space environment must be preserved as a common heritage of humankind and that we must do all in our power to keep its use exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The Chair: I shall now call on those delegations that have requested the floor to exercise the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Young-woo (Republic of Korea): I would like to briefly comment on the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First of all, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not in a position to claim the right of the peaceful use of outer space. My delegation would like to recall that the launching by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of ballistic missiles in the name of application satellites would be a flagrant violation of a series of Security Council resolutions that prohibit all activities related to its ballistic missile programme. I would therefore like to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respect its international obligations, including those set out in Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be brief. I have already made clear the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with regard to the peaceful use of outer space. Actually, the peaceful use of outer space is a legitimate right to which all countries are entitled. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as a proud spacefaring nation, will continue to launch application satellites necessary for its scientific research and economic development at the time and place that it decides. It will provide as much transparency as possible in accordance with internationally established norms and practices.

The Chair: I call on the representative of the Republic of Korea for a second statement in right of reply.

Mr. Kim Yong-woo (Republic of Korea): As we pointed out last week, Security Council resolutions 1874 (2009), 1718 (2006) and 2094 (2013) have made it clear that North Korea is not entitled to any launch using ballistic missile technology. Given North Korea's past record of nuclear test missile launches, it is clear that its claim to the peaceful use of outer space can hardly be justified. My delegation therefore strongly calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from any action that runs counter to the existing obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Chair: I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for a second statement in right of reply.

Mr. Kang Myong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have just one word, Mr. Chair, and I apologize. The reckless rhetoric of my South Korean colleague is not worthy of even a passing note. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejects the reckless remarks made by our South Korean colleague.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker under the cluster on outer space disarmament aspects.

As I noted earlier, the award ceremony for the 2015 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Certificates is scheduled to begin in a few minutes in this conference room. As is customary, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, will address the graduating fellows. For that purpose, and in accordance with established practice, I shall suspend the meeting at this point. I kindly ask all delegations to remain in their seats for the ceremony in order to congratulate and encourage our junior colleagues.

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 12.40 p.m.

The Chair: The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, 26 October, at 10:00 a.m. in this conference room. The Committee will take up the cluster on conventional weapons.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.