

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand five hundred and seventeenth plenary meeting**

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*President:* Mr. Duong Chi Dung .....(Viet Nam)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1517th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Distinguished delegates, as I announced yesterday, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, has confirmed his appointment of Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and his Personal Representative thereto, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedures of the Conference.

Today, it is my pleasure to offer a warm welcome to our Conference to Ms. Valovaya. On behalf of all the members of the Conference, I wish to congratulate her on her new appointment and to assure her of our full cooperation and support in her new assignment.

Now it is my honour to invite Ms. Valovaya to address the Conference for the first time. You have the floor, Madam.

**Ms. Valovaya** (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you. Mr. President, Ambassador Duong, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure and a privilege to address you today as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference, newly appointed in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

I am grateful to the United Nations Secretary-General for his trust, to all members of the Conference for their concurrence with the Secretary-General's decision and to Ambassador Duong for shepherding the process in his capacity as President of the Conference.

I should like to begin my address to the Conference on Disarmament by assuring you of my unwavering commitment to supporting the critical work of the Conference and its important mandate. I have been following disarmament-related matters for a very long time with great interest. Given the importance I pay to disarmament, I am pleased that my first public address since assuming office is to the Conference on Disarmament.

I am also proud to be the first woman appointed to the position. I believe women can bring a different outlook and experience to disarmament-related discussions. It is also well known that there is still a disparity in terms of participation of women and men in disarmament. And this is a field where we need more gender balance.

The Conference and its predecessors provided the international community with key multilateral agreements that to this day define the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control landscape at the international level.

In fact, I would like to pick up where my predecessor left off in his last address to the Conference in June, where he noted that "history speaks a stark language: whenever States seek security not in the collective value of diplomacy and dialogue but in the false protection of weapons, they are sleepwalking into disaster".

Negotiations are indeed the cornerstone of the Conference mandate. It is obvious that the Conference on Disarmament cannot be impervious to the geopolitical dynamics of our day. Yet, it is my firm view that such dynamics only point to a bigger-than-ever need for the Conference to succeed, as the forum intended to provide collective responses to global challenges to peace and security.

In reality, the current escalation of tensions globally is severely jeopardizing the acquis of disarmament, non-proliferation and the entire body of existing instruments.

As Secretary-General Guterres noted last February, "key components of the international arms control architecture are collapsing". This trend makes the need for progress in the Conference all the more urgent.

Going forward, I hope the Conference can build on the substantive work undertaken in 2018 to move forward the core items of the Conference. This Conference offers valuable knowledge and profound expertise, which will be critical to maintain for any future disarmament negotiations. I also encourage you to consider how to modernize working methods, strengthening inclusiveness and bringing a greater continuity to your work.

We will have the opportunity to meet, including individually, over the course of my first months here. I want to hear from you on how best the secretariat of the Conference and

I can harness our joint resources towards that end. Please rest assured that I am at your disposal, should it be deemed helpful, including on the remaining work for this session.

Ladies and gentlemen, as Alan Turing, the famous British computer scientist, has said, “we can only see a short distance ahead, but we can see plenty there that needs to be done”. This year marks the 100th anniversary of multilateralism in Geneva, as well as the fortieth anniversary of the Conference on Disarmament, both of which present us with an additional opportunity to reflect on our past and look forward to the future. And there is indeed plenty to be done. I mentioned geopolitics and the broader international security landscape already. In addition, and as Secretary-General Guterres and High Representative Nakamitsu have emphasized on numerous occasions, new scientific and technological developments and dynamics are challenging the international security paradigm.

For us to move forward and deliver on the important mandate bestowed on this body, we must ensure that the Conference does what it was intended to do: negotiate and agree new instruments governing complex, sensitive and urgent issues of national and international security, issues that impact on every living being on this planet.

The Conference has been a key instrument of multilateral disarmament and arms control for 40 years. I trust that you wish it to continue to be so, but its success depends on the will and commitment of the member States.

Ladies and gentlemen, all my predecessors called upon the member States of the Conference to overcome their differences and supported efforts to achieve results despite undeniable political challenges. I intend to continue along this path.

In these first few days since taking office, I have benefited from the knowledge of the Conference secretariat. I have also been impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the men and women serving the Conference. I want to acknowledge, moreover, the creativity and energy of the community of international partners, think tanks, research centres and civil society partners in Geneva in varied but very interrelated fields.

I would like to reiterate my commitment to ensuring that you continue to receive the highest degree of support in your work and to preserving the unique platform for convening the rich and diverse ecosystem offered by international Geneva, even as we navigate the implementation of the Strategic Heritage Plan.

Allow me to conclude with a reflection: A few days ago, a new temporary art installation was unveiled outside United Nations Headquarters in New York to celebrate dialogue for peace. The monument, a stylized peace bench, stands as a symbol of diplomacy. Next to the bench there is a plaque with a quote from Nelson Mandela: “The best weapon is to sit down and talk.” I look forward to you sitting down and talking and to interacting with each and every one of you personally.

Mr. President, thank you for allowing me to address this venerable body today. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attention.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for her statement. I would like also to thank her for her commitment to strengthening the Conference. Her rich experience and commitment to multilateralism will serve us well and hopefully help bring momentum to the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture.

I would now like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Chile.

**Mr. Eguiguren (Chile):** Thank you, Mr. President. I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Group of 21 and offer the warmest welcome and congratulations to Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this august body, as endorsed by this Conference.

The Group of 21 is certain that the qualifications, experience and proven diplomatic skills of Ms. Valovaya and her remarkable career experience in the multilateral field, where she has been committed to building bridges to allow cooperation between countries, will contribute greatly in supporting the work of the Conference.

The Group of 21 would like to assure the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament of its full support and cooperation in her endeavours. I would like to add in my personal capacity, and as Permanent Representative of Chile, that I am very pleased to

see Ms. Valovaya as the new Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as well as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I had the honour to meet her and work with her in my time in Moscow, where Ms. Valovaya, as Minister for Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission, was very open and receptive to cooperation with different countries, including my own, Chile. Knowing her vast professional experience and her personal qualifications, I am sure that Ms. Valovaya will make a very positive contribution to the work of the United Nations Office at Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament. She can count on all our support.

**The President:** I would like to thank the Ambassador of Chile for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

**Mr. Sharma** (India): I thank you, Mr. President. India has taken the floor to welcome Ms. Tatiana Valovaya and congratulate her on taking over as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. India also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Group of 21 welcoming her appointment. We are particularly pleased to see her in this important role, as she hails from the Russian Federation, a country with which India enjoys close bilateral relations. She brings a wealth of diplomatic and multilateral experience, and we are confident that the Conference will be able to advance its substantive work with her guidance and able leadership.

My delegation assures her of its full cooperation and support in her new assignment.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

**Mr. Li Song** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, Madam Secretary-General, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I wish to extend our congratulations to Ms. Valovaya on her assumption of the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and concurrently, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure of the Conference, as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference.

Madam Secretary-General, since the beginning of this year, notwithstanding the profound and complex changes occurring in the international political and security situation, we have been sitting down and talking here at this forum, all the while mindful of the purposes and aims of the Conference. The Conference and its member States have been working hard to have a serious exchange of views on the different important items on the Conference's agenda and on how to formulate a more comprehensive, balanced, pragmatic and effective programme of work. We would like to quickly free the Conference of extraneous political entanglements and, taking into account the new situation and new challenges, to embark on a normal path of substantive work, continuing our efforts to negotiate and conclude international arms control treaties that are conducive to upholding multilateralism, international security and strategic stability, to facilitating the international arms control and disarmament process, and to maintaining the collective security of the Conference's member States and the international community as a whole.

The Chinese delegation highly values the work of the Conference secretariat and is ready to work with you and your team to strengthen communication and cooperation, together, to promote substantive progress in the work of the Conference and to enable the sole multilateral arms control negotiation body to be revitalized.

**The President:** I would like to thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Zimbabwe.

**Mr. Mushayavanhu** (Zimbabwe): Thank you, Mr. President. I am particularly pleased to welcome and congratulate Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament as well as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference. We are confident that her vast diplomatic skills will serve the Conference on Disarmament well, especially when it needs some jump-starting to overcome the challenges that it is currently facing.

As the incoming President of the Conference on Disarmament, I very much look forward to working with her closely and also with her team, as we fold the work of the current session into a report that I will present to the United Nations General Assembly.

My delegation wishes Ms. Valovaya all the best in her new role.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Zimbabwe for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Colombia.

**Ms. Mendoza Agudelo** (Colombia): Thank you, Mr. President. Let me begin by thanking you and your team for all the efforts that you have made over the past four weeks. Your commitment to the responsibilities entrusted to you since you took office has enabled us to hold intensive discussions that we hope will result in a session in 2019 in which we can break the deadlock in our work. For that to happen, we also require the ongoing work of our missions, which are seeking creative and constructive solutions to controversial issues. Initiatives such as that of the Netherlands, in presenting its working document, which allow us to discuss specific issues concerning organization and to look for good practices that worked in the past and that we could use in the future.

The commitment of Colombia to multilateralism and, in particular, to the international disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regime is resolute and permanent. This is why we hope to work with Zimbabwe, as the next president of the current session of the Conference, and with the next six presidents, to whom we now express our commitment to work constructively to achieve common objectives.

I would like to take advantage of the presence of Ms. Tatiana Valovaya in this room to welcome her as Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We hope that her mandate will enable her Office to continue to play an outstanding role within the international machinery. It is an honour to have a woman leading this Office, especially one with so many years of experience in diplomacy. Ms. Valovaya, your academic and professional careers, and your knowledge of multilateralism, will be very useful to the United Nations and to the work that we do in Geneva every day. Your appointment is also a great step forward towards our common goal of strengthening gender equality and combating discrimination at all levels. Please count on the support of my delegation in the exercise of your duties.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Colombia for her statement and kind words for the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

**Mr. Nikolaichik** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus congratulates Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference. We know Ms. Valovaya well through her work as a member of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission. We are sure that her professionalism and excellent personal qualities will lend fresh impetus to our work. We assure her of our full support.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Finland, on behalf of the European Union.

**Ms. Kemppainen** (Finland): Mr. President, on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as aligning countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, I wish to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and congratulate her on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. We are pleased to note that the United Nations Secretary-General has chosen a female candidate, the first woman to hold this important position.

As Dr. Valovaya said, women traditionally are underrepresented across multilateral forums and institutions that focus on security, and the European Union will therefore continue to advocate the full and equal participation of women and men in all decision-making and action, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. President, I take this occasion to emphasize that the Conference's continued relevance is of utmost importance for the European Union. The Conference on Disarmament should fulfil its crucial function to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties

and it could also elaborate other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct.

We deeply regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate for more than twenty years. We reiterate that our long-standing priority in the Conference is to immediately commence negotiations of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, and we support starting such negotiations in accordance with the mandate contained in document CD/1299.

Strong political will and flexibility are required from all Conference members if we are to break the impasse and put the Conference back on track. We should bring forward technical, substantive work and broaden areas of agreement, so that we are better prepared to start negotiations when the overall context so allows. We must modernize our working methods to avoid protracted procedural debates on the organization of work, as was proposed in the working paper by the Netherlands, which was discussed yesterday.

The European Union has a long-standing commitment to the enlargement of the Conference, which currently has 65 members. We underline the importance of furthering substantive consultations on the expansion of its membership and strongly support the appointment of a special coordinator in this respect.

Furthermore, we support engagement with civil society, academia, industry and research institutions and would welcome further initiatives in this regard, building on the Civil Society Forum initiative of the outgoing Secretary-General of the Conference.

Mr. President, we are grateful to the United Nations Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their continued engagement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and their support for the Conference, and we look forward to close cooperation with the new Secretary-General of the Conference for the benefit of all Conference members.

With regard to today's panel discussion, Mr. President, I would like to refer only to the European Union statement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which was delivered in the Conference on Disarmament on 13 June. It is available online.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Finland for her statement on behalf of the European Union. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

**Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba):** Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of the Republic of Cuba, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, and we endorse the statement of the Group of 21. We would like, in our national capacity, to reiterate our full cooperation with her in the performance of her new duties as Secretary-General and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this Conference. It is a pleasure for our delegation to have her in this room, where, as the first woman to hold the position, we are sure that she will leave a very positive mark, as she has done throughout her career in the service of diplomacy and multilateralism. It is an honour to have her among us.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

**Mr. Andrabi (Pakistan):** Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to join other colleagues in welcoming and congratulating Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, for her appointment as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Representative to the Conference.

We thank Ms. Valovaya for her thoughtful remarks and look forward to working with her in the years to come. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise that is well suited to the important responsibility entrusted to her. We have no doubt that she will make a meaningful contribution to the work of the Conference. I also take this opportunity to assure her of the full cooperation and support of my delegation. She is fortunate to have a seasoned team on her side, led by Ms. Anja Kaspersen and ably assisted by Ms. Radha Day and other colleagues of the Conference secretariat.

I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on a very successful presidency of the Conference. Following in the footsteps of your predecessors, you organized thematic

debates in the Conference covering the core agenda items. In the absence of a framework for holding structured discussions this year, the substantive debates in the plenary meetings proved to be a productive use of the time available to the Conference. In parallel, you also spurred a very valuable exchange of views on a programme of work, with new and creative ideas coming to the fore. We would particularly like to thank the delegation of the Netherlands for the working paper in this regard, which is receiving very useful consideration in our capital. You fulfilled your responsibilities as the Conference President in the most able and transparent manner.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

**Mr. Berkat** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation supports the statement of the Group of 21 and joins its voice to those welcoming Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

We are confident that your great experience will be an important asset to the Conference on Disarmament as it carries out its mandate and faces up to the challenges of the current time. We look forward to working with you and your team in order to contribute to the success of the Conference's activities.

Mr. President, I would like also to take this opportunity to express to you my sincerest expressions of gratitude for all you have done while holding the presidency: carrying the Conference forwards to achieve positive results and helping to lay the groundwork for the next presidency.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and kind words for the President. Now I give the floor to Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran

**Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for all your efforts during your tenure as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation aligns itself with the welcome message delivered by Chile on behalf of the Group of 21 to Ms. Tatiana Valovaya and congratulates her on her well-deserved appointment as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva as well as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. We acknowledge that you have assumed this office at a very challenging time when even the concept of disarmament is sometimes questioned.

We are not disappointed, though, as we have to redouble our efforts to advance the cause of disarmament through multilateral forums such as this august body, the Conference on Disarmament. All States that care for global peace and a world free of nuclear weapons must take a collective and united stand to push for meaningful progress on the Conference's four core agenda items. We trust, Madam Secretary-General, that under your able stewardship, this body will make important contributions towards nuclear disarmament. We look forward to working with you and with your team to advance our collective mission.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

**Ms. Alfaro Espinosa** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I begin by thanking you, Ambassador Dung. This week you will relinquish your role as President, having made tireless efforts to reflect on the subject of the negotiating mandate, and to achieve progress in the discussion of specific items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, aligning ourselves with the message conveyed by Chile on behalf of the Group of 21, my delegation welcomes the honourable presence of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Dr. Tatiana Valovaya, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and we welcome her appointment as the first woman to hold this important post. Her appointment strengthens the image of women around the world. Dr. Valovaya, you are assuming your duties in Geneva at a crucial time for world peace. Increasing tensions between nuclear-weapon States are a major risk to international security. The Conference on Disarmament remains unable to conclude new multilateral instruments, and existing ones are being questioned. Furthermore, the recent

termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty is an example of the threat faced by the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In these circumstances, any assistance that you can provide to the Conference on Disarmament will be valuable and welcome, in accordance with the rules of procedure, with the ultimate aim of strengthening multilateralism and preserving our collective security system. We wish you fruitful work and every success.

**The President:** I would like to thank the Ambassador of Peru for her statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Lee Jang-keun** (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, as today is the last plenary meeting under your presidency, I would like to join other delegations in thanking you for your stewardship as the fifth President of this year, in steering our group in a transparent, fair and balanced manner during the past several weeks. In particular, we highly appreciate your efforts for substantive discussions on the core agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as on the long-delayed programme of work. Even though we could not produce any tangible outcome, the depth of our discussions and the level of active participation we had were, I believe, a humble but meaningful achievement, especially at a time when the Conference is still mired in an extended period of frustration.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as new Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva as well as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this body.

I am confident that your ample experience as a professional of international relations, diplomacy and journalism will be a valuable asset to the members of the Conference in our joint endeavour to fulfil our mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiation body.

As you are the first woman in your position, I wish you great success. My delegation looks forward to working closely with you and your team during your mandate.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me to begin by expressing my utmost gratitude and appreciation for your leadership of the Conference over the past few weeks and for the conspicuous efforts that you and your team made in preparing a draft decision to advance the work of the Conference.

I wish to congratulate Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. My delegation aligns itself with the statement by the Group of 21 delivered by the Ambassador of Chile.

In my national capacity, I wish to reiterate that my delegation remains fully ready to cooperate with you. We are confident that, with your expertise, leadership and diplomatic skills, you will make an important contribution to achieving progress in the work of the Conference and to improving its ability to fulfil its mandate for the benefit of international security. I wish you every success. My delegation hopes to work closely with you.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we would like to extend our warmest greetings to Dr. Tatiana Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and we fully subscribe to the comments made by the Ambassador of Chile as coordinator of the Group of 21.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes this recent appointment and expresses its firm support for, and desire to cooperate with, Dr. Valovaya during her tenure. We are sure that Dr. Valovaya, with her extensive experience in journalism, diplomacy and government service, will contribute to the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among member States that will help to overcome the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament.



**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Latvia.

**Mr. Kārklinš** (Latvia): Thank you, Mr. President. As the last coordinator of the informal group of observer States – and while awaiting the nomination of the new coordinator – I would like, on behalf of the informal group of observer States, to use this opportunity to welcome Ms. Tatiana Valovaya to Geneva and congratulate her on her appointment to the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Some observer States have been waiting for membership for a few decades already. Let me encourage the new Secretary-General of the Conference, as well as all Conference member States, to examine the issue of Conference enlargement as soon as possible.

I would also like to use this opportunity, Mr. President, in my national capacity, to congratulate and thank you for your activities as President of the Conference. We saw that your dedication led us to very productive discussions in recent weeks.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Latvia for his statement. I give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Dalcero** (Brazil): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to associate my delegation with the statement of the Group of 21 delivered by the Ambassador of Chile and warmly welcome Ms. Tatiana Valovaya and congratulate her on assuming the roles of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference. We are convinced that, with her experience gained over a rich and diversified diplomatic career, she will be able to provide the member States of this august body with the necessary support.

As today is the last day of your presidency, we would like to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to thank you for your efforts and dedication.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. Now I give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

**Mr. Heredia Acosta** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. Very briefly, I would like first of all to express thanks for, acknowledge and endorse the message kindly delivered by the Ambassador, the Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the Group of 21: thank you very much. Secondly, my delegation wishes to join others in welcoming Dr. Valovaya and in congratulating her on her appointment to this Conference on Disarmament and, at the same time, tell her that we take very much to heart her call for the Conference, for this forum, to return to its negotiating essence or, as you called it, the cornerstone of its mandate. And finally, Mr. President, my delegation joins in the expressions of gratitude and appreciation for your efforts in conducting our work during your presidency.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Mexico for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mr. Masmejean** (Switzerland): Thank you, Mr. President. I am taking the floor first of all to welcome the presence among us of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. I would like to congratulate Ms. Valovaya on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, in her capacity as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this forum. I would also like to welcome the fact that you are here with us today, Ms. Valovaya, and that you have shared with us your thoughts on the Conference and your support for our work. We fully share your views on the scope of the Conference's past achievements and the importance of the Conference being able to contribute once again to the major challenges that we face in the field of international security. We are convinced that your experience and diplomatic expertise will be an important asset for the Conference and look forward to cooperating with you. You can count on our full support. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the members of the secretariat for the support that they provide to the Conference throughout the year. Our thanks also go to the current presidency of the Conference, held by Viet Nam, especially for the important and substantive discussion on the way in which we conduct our work that it has initiated in recent weeks. We are

convinced that this debate will be essential as we seek to overcome the blockages that have hampered the work of our forum for too long.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Elsayed (Egypt):** Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Chile on behalf of the Group of 21, and I am honoured to take the floor to give the warmest welcome to Ms. Tatiana Valovaya and congratulate her on her appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference.

My delegation would also like to seize the opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, and your team for the very successful presidency and for steering our work in an outstanding manner. I would also like to assure our incoming President, the Ambassador of Zimbabwe, and Ms. Valovaya of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? It seems not.

Distinguished delegates, as previously announced, today's plenary meeting is designed for a substantive focus on agenda item 3, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, with the participation of Ambassador Gennady Gatilov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Juan Eduardo Eguiguren of Chile and Mr. Daniel Porras from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research as the panellists.

Following the panellists' presentations, I intend to open the floor for a discussion on this substantive topic. Once our discussion concludes, I will open the floor for any other matter delegations would like to raise.

I would like now to give the floor to our first panellist, Ambassador Gennady Gatilov.

**Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*):** Mr. President please allow me to join with many other delegations in congratulating Ms. Tatiana Valovaya on her appointment to the high office of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference. We are certain that her appointment will promote the effective work of our body. May we also join the words of appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your able leadership of the Conference over this difficult period.

The subject of today's meeting has already been considered on many occasions both this year and last. In-depth discussions have taken place in Subsidiary Body 3 with the aim of achieving the convergence of States' positions on preventing an arms race in outer space. A much more ambitious and practical task faced the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which was established on the initiative of Russia and China. It held two sessions in 2018–2019 here in Geneva. The issue of preventing an arms race in outer space remains the focus of attention not only of the Conference, but also of two other forums, the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, that form part of the disarmament mechanism of the United Nations.

Specific aspects of this issue are being touched upon during the session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. A great amount of work in this field is being accomplished by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research which, for almost 20 years, has held an annual space security conference.

All the well-known facts that I have listed demonstrate a growing realization on the part of the majority of States of the risks and dangers for national, regional and international development which can stem from States' engaging in an arms race in outer space. There is also increasing awareness of the threat to international peace and global security from the deployment of weapons in outer space. This positive, encouraging tendency provides us with a real opportunity for agreeing on effective measures for keeping outer space weapon-free and thus not turning it into an area where an armed conflict could erupt sooner or later.

Unfortunately, another, opposite, tendency has recently started to gain traction. Certain States say that they have plans to deploy attack systems in outer space and are drawing up concept papers on conducting military operations there. What is more worrying is that in the very near future, these plans are due to move on to the stage of practical realization. This is being done on a variety of pretences. For example, there is talk of the need to defend national or collective assets in outer space, to improve the safety of satellite clusters and to protect nations' or blocs' vital, space-related interests.

The familiar enthusiastic acceptance of the myth of a growing external threat which cannot be warded off in any way without space-based attack systems is being exploited. Such justification for military space plans, including the pre-emptive stationing of weapons in outer space and their deployment to prevent prospective hostile acts against national outer space objects, sounds, to say the least, unconvincing.

The argument about super transparency in the military space sphere to which our Western colleagues so often and so gladly resort also sounds unconvincing. Comments about rolling out weapons in outer space or the possibility of their tactical use is not exactly transparency. This is a direct threat or, if you like, an ultimatum to the international community, most of which is categorically opposed to the weaponization of outer space.

At the same time, this looks like a bid for undivided, uncontrolled supremacy in outer space, which would give individual States the possibility, on the pain of using military force, to dictate their conditions with regard to the building of relations and coordination arrangements not only in earth orbits, but also here on Earth.

Events over the last one and a half years, including recent statements at various levels about intentions to deploy weapons in space, lay bare the real reasons for several States' longstanding active opposition to multilateral efforts to draft and sign a legally binding international instrument and to promote initiatives designed to preserve outer space for peaceful uses and exploration.

While using every possible means to discredit peaceful efforts and torpedo proposals to establish reliable, treaty-based guarantees to prevent the roll-out of weapons in outer space, their detractors have proved incapable of proposing any meaningful initiative to prevent the arms race in space. There is no need to go into any more examples. In the course of 10 years, we have heard laments about the threat which surface-based anti-satellite systems can pose for space objects. In contacts with those of our colleagues who expressed the greatest concerns, we publicly suggested that they join an initiative in that respect. Furthermore, we reiterated our readiness to consider and discuss it. But our partners only answered with silence. It must be said that, until recently, they remained silent to our repeated entreaties for an honest answer to the question of whether they intend to station weapons in space. So much for transparency. Now we basically know the answer.

Any statements or decisions on military space matters require an extremely careful analysis of their implications. It is already clear that giving effect to plans to put weapons in near-earth space will have an extremely adverse impact on international security and global stability. As in the case of nuclear arms control and a further reduction in strategic arsenals, thanks to the efforts of certain Western countries, we are entering a new space age. More than likely, it will be distinguished by a further decline in trust between States, an increase in tension, the emergence of new threats and provocations, the undermining of fundamental agreements on the use of outer space, a reduction in the predictability and sustainability of space activities, which will make it less safe and result in weaker international security in the world.

All this strengthens our conviction that it has been right, over the past 20 years, together with other responsible States to prefer to seek a viable route to keeping outer space free of all kinds of arms. Russia remains committed to this aim. We regard a legally binding agreement banning the weaponization of space, based inter alia on the principles and rules of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty as the best means of achieving it.

The conclusion of such an agreement and relevant States' accession to it will ensure that no objects stationed in outer space are weapons and that they are used in accordance with the aforementioned Treaty. In this way, we will be able to rule out any possibility of turning outer space into a place where there is an armed stand-off.

The main thing is that there will be no probability of an armed conflict erupting in outer space and shifting to the Earth.

A prohibition on the weaponization of outer space will preclude an arms race or the build-up on the Earth of military capabilities jeopardizing international peace and security. This is because States which do not possess military space capabilities will look for other asymmetrical responses to threats deriving from the appearance of weapons in outer space by even acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Apart from this, prohibiting the deployment of weapons in outer space will create propitious conditions for trust underpinning the constructive resolution of problems resulting from the space activities of States and non-State actors. The actual establishment by the international community of agreed safeguards against the weaponization of outer space will promote a non-confrontational environment open to cooperation between States on the exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes, resting on the principle of equality.

Until such time as any such instrument is signed, it might be possible to agree on other ways and means of improving the security of space activities and of preserving outer space as a peaceful conflict-free environment and of countering the threat of its weaponization. In this context, there has been repeated emphasis on the importance of devising measures to promote the transparency of and trust in space activities. Russia is still in favour of continuing work to that end. Confidence-building measures can and must be a component of comprehensive arrangements to avert an arms race in outer space. Like most countries, we stress that such measures are supplementary and cannot replace a legally binding agreement.

In conformity with this position and to further its earlier initiatives regarding weapons in space back in 2004, Russia undertook not to be the first to station weapons in outer space. To date, 21 States have become full members of this initiative, which consistently benefits from the support of two thirds of the States Members of the United Nations. It is a source of regret and concern that so far not one of the Western countries, above all those of relevance to outer space, have expressed any desire to join it. Our proposal has merely come in for criticism which, as we now see, was only a smokescreen for the realization of plans to deploy tactical weapon systems in outer space. Above all, I again emphasize that our detractors have not come up with a single constructive idea on how to prevent an arms race in outer space.

We have heard only general discussions about the drawing up of some rules and standards for responsible conduct in outer space which, on the one hand, sounded like a hint that someone is behaving or intends to behave irresponsibly there. On the other hand, this idea resembled an attempt to reinterpret the principles and rules contained in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the most crucial of which is that:

*(spoke in English)*

States Parties to the Treaty shall carry on activities in the exploration and use of outer space ... in accordance with international law ... in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and understanding.

*(spoke in Russian)*

It can hardly be said that plans to put weapons in outer space along with the active pursuit of their military use is consonant with this provision of the main international instrument on space law, which is more pertinent than ever.

We call on all States to hold a substantive, constructive discussion on the prohibition and prevention of an arms race in outer space with a view to jointly devising consensual measures to keep outer space weapon-free and thereby strengthen international peace and global security. Time will not stand still. It will be a crime against future generations if we squander this opportunity. As was shown by the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, despite the fact that its final report was not adopted, States have not forgotten how to listen to and understand each other. The main thing is that they are all still capable, we hope, of coming to an agreement on the most difficult issues on the disarmament agenda.

Russia for its part is prepared to engage in such a discussion.

**The President:** I would like to thank Ambassador Gatilov for his presentation. I now give the floor to Ambassador Eguiguren.

**Mr. Eguiguren** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador Dung. Dear colleagues, I appreciate the invitation to participate as a panellist in this thematic meeting. It is a pleasure for me to be with you today to discuss some of the aspects of the prevention of an arms race in outer space that are of particular interest to Chile. It is truly a challenge to speak on such a broad and complex issue, particularly at a time when, as all of us here know, multilateral arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament in general are facing serious challenges. These challenges, as all of us in this room know, are of an eminently political nature. However, the growing threats to the peaceful use of outer space go beyond the political sphere, and perhaps that is why there is a pressing need to reiterate and continue discussions.

Indeed, as has been pointed out in the discussions held within this Conference, technological advances, the exploration of space, in particular its commercial dimension, increased dependence on space assets and the risk of interference therewith, space debris and the growing number of actors in outer space constitute new challenges to space security. In addition, there is a recognized procedural need to improve coordination on this issue, while respecting the specific mandate of each body, in the relevant forums, namely the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly.

Finally, the socioeconomic development dimension of space exploration is of particular importance in understanding what underlies the concept of the common good of humanity, by virtue of which all States are called upon to contribute to this debate. In this regard, international cooperation in outer space activities, which guarantees equitable access to benefits and serves as a tool for preserving peace and security, is essential. The many prisms and forums through which it is possible to analyse the prevention of an arms race in outer space make it a topic of great interest, all the more so because the challenges are adding up exponentially, the proposals are varied and the concrete responses are few.

Notwithstanding this, we would at least like to try to take an optimistic view of the rather grey picture of arms control and non-proliferation today. Despite its imperfections, the body of international agreements on matters of international security must be analysed in terms of what we have achieved, how we have achieved it and how we can improve it, while promoting an inclusive and ongoing debate, given that inaction is not an option. With regard to the existing legal framework, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, known as the Outer Space Treaty, which entered into force in 1967, constitutes the basic existing framework for international space law. Almost two years ago, the Treaty's half-century of existence was celebrated, and an extensive debate was held regarding its implementation and validity. Although the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty are a faithful reflection of the scientific and technical progress made at the dawn of space exploration and hence the need to create a legal regime that would allow for the peaceful coexistence of the two pioneering powers in space exploration in a cold war context, the fact is that the principles on which the Treaty is based are still valid today, namely the peaceful use of outer space, the prohibition of the placement of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space and the prohibition of the stationing of such weapons on celestial bodies.

This implies that outer space must be explored and used for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, and that the Moon and other celestial bodies cannot be the subject of national appropriation or sovereignty claims. It should be noted that the principles of international cooperation enshrined in the Treaty facilitate the implementation of transparency and mutual confidence-building measures, such as observation of space launches, visits to facilities on celestial bodies and consultative arrangements. Remarkably, for its time, the Treaty also contains explicit provisions on the protection of the environment, establishing that States shall conduct exploration of outer space so as to avoid its harmful contamination and also adverse changes in the environment of the Earth.

The legal regime founded on peace and international collaboration that is enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty established the principles and parameters under which a number of legal instruments that dealt with specific aspects not addressed in the original Treaty were negotiated, namely the 1967 Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of

Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space; the 1971 Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects; the 1974 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space; and the 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. The legal regime created in 1967 responded to the needs of a specific time and context. Today, the challenges that I mentioned earlier in my speech, in particular the diverse nature of threats to the security of outer space owing to commercial activities and scientific and technological advances, have highlighted the inadequacy of the existing legal framework to address both challenges and opportunities. Notwithstanding this, the principles on which it was built continue to be valid, perhaps even more so than 50 years ago.

The increase in the activities of private companies has been considerable in recent years, and more and more countries have put satellites into orbit. At the beginning of 2019, there were more than 4,987 satellites orbiting the Earth, of which 1,500 are active, an increase of about 2.68 per cent compared to April 2018. A significant number of these satellites are performing multiple functions (communications, scientific observation, navigation, civil and military technological developments). It should be noted, therefore, that the impacts of space activities on people's lives are multiple and diverse in nature. This aspect is particularly important because, as the Treaty stipulates, outer space must be explored and exploited for the benefit and in the interests of all humankind, and all countries are therefore entitled to these benefits.

Access to knowledge derived from research applied to space activities and technologies, and the application of that knowledge to education and innovation will have an impact on the comprehensive development of countries. It is therefore no exaggeration to state that space technology applications will and do play a fundamental role in enabling countries to achieve the objectives of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, this will be possible only to the extent that the principle of international cooperation is strengthened, in particular by taking into account that, according to empirical evidence, space activities have global consequences. Addressing these risks requires strengthening international norms and mechanisms to address pollution while generating the opportunities needed for no one to be left behind in terms of the benefits derived from the peaceful uses of space.

As I was saying, the importance of the Outer Space Treaty as the cornerstone of the international legal regime governing the use of outer space remains intact, but the Treaty is not sufficient to meet the contemporary challenges that I have described. Fresh impetus is therefore required to create new instruments to better regulate space security, prevent an arms race in space and give concrete expression to the spirit of the Treaty in terms of international cooperation. By way of example, the Treaty prohibits only the placement of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space; it does not prohibit the placement of other types of weapons or the launching of missiles that may have warheads for weapons of mass destruction. This loophole reflects the evolution of weapons technologies since the negotiation of the Treaty, and has been a growing concern for States.

In 2008, China and the Russian Federation submitted the text of 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. The text was resubmitted in 2014 with some important modifications. The Russian Federation also presented another initiative involving a commitment on no first placement of weapons in outer space. In addition to these specific proposals for a new legally binding international instrument, there have been a number of initiatives to establish non-binding, voluntary rules of a political nature, as a form of soft law. In this regard, it is interesting to recall that this issue has been addressed by the General Assembly through the establishment of a group of governmental experts that carried out a study on various transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. This group, established in 2011, was the second group, after the one created in 1993, that failed to achieve a consensus outcome. In the course of the deliberations of the 2011 group, the governmental experts agreed on substantive measures and recommended that States should implement them on a voluntary basis. The measures could be considered as an intermediate step towards, not a substitute for, a legally binding instrument to address and mitigate the growing risks in outer space. The measures are intended to encourage responsible conduct in outer space and to reflect the general principles of international law, namely by being cross-cutting, effective, pragmatic and

sustainable, and, as far as possible, by having an immediate effect. The international and interregional cooperation aspect of the implementation of the measures is noteworthy.

Another proposal developed within the framework of the transparency measures is the International Code of Conduct, which was proposed by the European Union and was formally presented in 2012. The Code aimed at enhancing the safety, security and sustainability of all activities in outer space, based on a number of principles, namely the freedom of States to access, explore and use space and to exploit space objects for peaceful purposes, without interference and with full respect for the safety and integrity of space objects in orbit; the responsibility of States for measures taken and activities carried out, to prevent space from becoming a source of conflict; and the right to individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Notwithstanding its voluntary nature, the process was questioned as not being sufficiently inclusive and as lacking a multilateral mandate. It is clear that there are different perceptions of the value of these voluntary initiatives. While some States consider that they are the best way to make progress on concrete and realistic measures, for others they constitute a kind of placebo that prevents the development of legally binding instruments. In this regard, it is worth recalling the only conclusion of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities that was proposed by the expert from Chile, which states that voluntary political measures may constitute the basis for the consideration of concepts and proposals for legally binding obligations.

This reflects the recognition by a significant group of States of the important role of voluntary political commitments, which seem to be an area where progress can be made, as demonstrated by the adoption last June, within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The paths and initiatives taken by the international community have oscillated between the two principles embodied in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty: on the one hand, peaceful use, and on the other, the prevention of an arms race in space. The highly competitive nature of the space environment, coupled with its strategic value, has the potential to make it the scene of tensions that put international peace and security at risk.

Although it may be redundant to do so in this room, I must remind you that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the permanent core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This is not the time to discuss the various reasons why we have not been able to adopt a programme of work, but there is no doubt that the great differences that exist on this subject between some of the major powers have also contributed to perpetuating this regrettable impasse. We experienced a moment of hope when the General Assembly established the first group of governmental experts with a specific mandate to address this issue. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the experts and the remarkable leadership of its Chair, our colleague Guilherme Patriota from Brazil, the group was unable to achieve its goal. This is certainly a frustrating outcome, but it is understandable considering the current political context. It should be stressed, however, that the great majority of the States represented were willing to accept the consensus report, so it is to be hoped that, as in the process of the transparency and confidence-building measures, a new group can be established at some point to pursue this objective, which is longed for by the international community.

Finally, I would like to share some reflections as a representative of a developing State. One of the main trends in international relations has been the growing interaction between States. In the case of outer space, we see how all our countries and citizens depend, in one way or another, on technologies derived from the peaceful uses of outer space. Moreover, all States have a common responsibility to preserve outer space, which is, as the Outer Space Treaty points out, the province of all mankind and, as such, is a matter of concern not only for the spacefaring nations. In this regard, there are similarities with the process that culminated in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in that it is a global concern that affects everyone, that the uncontrolled use of technologies can have an incalculable impact and that it was finally possible to reach an agreement thanks to the awareness not only of scientists in the developed world but also of citizens in all corners of the planet. It is clear that, in the case of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we are in a situation of transition, but the proactive participation of delegates from all regions in processes such as the recent group of experts and in discussions such as today's

encourages us to persevere and contribute to achieving a common vision in order to preserve the benefits of peaceful uses and maintain outer space as a common heritage of peace. We will continue to work and collaborate to achieve this common goal.

Mr. President, before concluding my statement, I would like to thank you for your tireless efforts and initiatives to deepen the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament and to make progress on the substantive items on its agenda. I would also like to welcome the next president of the Conference on Disarmament, the Ambassador of Zimbabwe, to whom we offer our full support. Thank you very much.

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Eguiguren for his presentation. I now give the floor to Mr. Daniel Porras of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

**Mr. Porras** (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research): Thank you, Mr. President. First and foremost, let me thank you and your Mission for inviting me to speak before the Conference on Disarmament today. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is always pleased to share its research and findings with member States. And since I am the first member of UNIDIR to address our new Director-General, let me also extend our warm greetings and our assurances of our continued support.

Second, like my colleagues before me, I would also like to recall that UNIDIR is one of many organizations that are gender champions in Geneva. Earlier this year, the Gender Champions Impact Group distributed a resource pack to member States that provides useful information on how to make our meetings more diverse and inclusive. If anyone should like to read it, it is available on our website. And I would also like to thank our new Director-General for her support on gender inclusivity.

Now, before I begin on the substance, I know that the subject of prevention of an arms race in outer space requires a great deal of stamina, so if the interpreters will humour me, I would like to tell a quick joke. Did you hear that our solar system has received its galactic review? It was not very good. We only got one star. Thank you.

Now, to work. Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to announce the publication of the report on the UNIDIR Space Security Conference 2019. Many thanks to those who were able to attend and make this edition a great success. This year, we sought to build on the work of several multilateral discussions within the United Nations, including the Conference on Disarmament's own subsidiary body 3. Each panel was selected with the intention of further exploring some of the issues discussed in the various United Nations bodies over the last 18 months. One panel in particular addressed one of the biggest challenges still facing our work on space security – namely, verification in space. The panel discussion provided us all with an opportunity to engage with some of the leading technical experts who might one day cut through the Gordian knot that is space verification. Many of their comments have guided my research in this area, and I am glad to have this opportunity to share my findings thus far.

As many of you will have already heard me say, there are numerous indications that space objects – namely, satellites – will increasingly become targets for disruption and destruction in future conflicts. We all know that satellites play a critical role in our daily lives, but it is even more true for modern military forces. Troops in the field, submarines across the ocean and even nuclear forces are all dependent on satellites.

Given all the military benefits from space technology, it is not surprising that more countries are seeking counterspace, and even counter-counterspace capabilities. These are capabilities that can deny an adversary's space benefits through disruption or destruction. These capabilities come in many forms. Here in the Conference on Disarmament, we have already discussed several types, including:

- Kinetic – weapons that use physical force to physically damage or destroy an object, such as an anti-satellite missile
- Non-kinetic – weapons that use high-intensity energy to blind or damage an object, such as a laser
- Electronic – devices that use electromagnetic signals to overwhelm or fool a satellite signal; and



- Cyber – which involves attacking a command or control system through software-related attacks

It has become evident that States increasingly see these capabilities as elemental components of a modern military. There is a steady rise in the use of electronic interference on the battlefield, direct-ascent anti-satellite weapons are still being developed, and more countries are seeking to expand the mandates of their military space forces. When one considers these trends along with the strained relationships between some of the world's leading space Powers, it seems likely that satellites will increasingly be targets. The latter – the destruction of objects – is particularly worrisome, because the destruction of objects leaves behind space debris, which is a threat to all space objects, not just military ones.

Given the growing possibility for considerable destabilization of the space environment, many of you have participated in talks to prevent or at least mitigate the effects of conflict in orbit. However, one of the divisive issues that continues to feature in our discussions is verification of compliance. As many of you will recall, one of the reasons that some States are reluctant to adopt the approach in the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, as proposed by Russia and China, is that it is not considered effectively verifiable. In this context, UNIDIR has conducted research into current and emerging space technologies to understand the extent and limitations of a possible verification system in space. By understanding the technology, we might be able to focus discussions on those challenges that are verifiable now, while leaving more difficult challenges for the future.

Before examining the technology, UNIDIR sought criteria for what a verification system should achieve. Many experts often cite the criteria set by United States Ambassador Paul Nitze, one of the foremost architects of the United States foreign policy post-World War II. He testified before Congress that a verification system should be able to detect a militarily meaningful violation in time to prevent the benefit of a violation. In this context, a verification system does not need to be perfect, just good enough to detect a violation before a benefit can be exploited. When applied to space, there are certain functions that any verification system would need to perform to achieve these ends. First, it must detect objects and activities in space. Second, it must be able to identify an object and attribute the object to its owner. Finally, the system should be able to continuously track objects, at least enough to know if the object should ever engage in threatening behaviours.

This is not the first time UNIDIR has undertaken a study of verification for space. In 2010, UNIDIR addressed this issue, analysing space situational awareness (SSA) technology to determine what verification system might be possible. Now, space situational awareness refers to knowledge and characterization of the space environment, including the position and trajectories of space objects and even space weather. Space situational awareness relies on sensors to detect satellites remotely, including ground- and space-based optical telescopes, radar and laser-ranging systems. It also employs complex computing processes to analyse raw data and produce actionable information, such as warnings about collisions between objects.

Ten years ago already, it was found that detecting launches and re-entries was feasible. Early warning detection satellites and radars are able to detect rocket launches and track their trajectories. What presented greater difficulties, though, was monitoring on-orbit activities. While it was possible then to see what objects were doing in orbit in a limited sense, it was not possible to determine the function of a satellite. Consequently, it was concluded then that before an effectively verifiable system could be implemented for any agreement, there would need to be greater investment in global SSA capabilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, 10 years have passed, and SSA technology has come a long way. Developments in three areas are greatly facilitating a much clearer and more nuanced picture of space activities: more sensors, better sensors and better computing.

First, over the last 10 years, the number of SSA sensors around the world has increased by orders of magnitude. The most relied-upon system is the United States Air Force's Space Surveillance Network, with more than 30 telescopes across the northern hemisphere. This network already tracks more than 20,000 objects larger than 10 cm and makes hundreds of thousands of detections each day. The United States Air Force has continued expanding this system by partnering with other Governments, institutions and private actors to gain access to more telescopes all over the world. It was just announced,

for example, that four Japanese satellites will host United States SSA sensors for the United States Government, providing coverage across the southern hemisphere, where it is most needed.

The Russia-based International Scientific Optical Network has also made significant advances. It now hosts more than 50 telescopes in more than 17 countries. In the last ten years, the Network has increased the number of detections it makes by a magnitude of 200. Other countries as well, such as France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, are deploying their own niche sensors, which are then linked in an international network, adding to the overall number of sensors available all over the world.

Yet it is the commercial sector that has made the largest gains. ExoAnalytic Solutions, for example, has only been in business since 2008, and it has already deployed more than 275 telescopes around the world. By using “off the shelf” technology – i.e., not custom made – the company is deploying low-quality sensors all over the world to provide more persistent coverage for its SSA network. As such, ExoAnalytic Solutions has become one of the leading providers of SSA data, even surpassing some of the capabilities of the United States Air Force.

The second development in space situational awareness is better sensors. New SSA technology is enabling operators to see smaller objects from farther away and with greater detail. For example, the United States Air Force is about to bring the new Space Fence online. This is a radar located in Australia that will enable the United States to detect objects as small as 1 cm, increasing the catalogue of trackable objects from 20,000 to more than 200,000.

Private actors are also widening the types of sensors being deployed. One company, called Space Solutions Consulting, is developing a laser-based radar (LIDAR) that can make a topographical map of a space object up to 1,000 km away. This LIDAR is intended to take readings of satellites that might be in need of repairs. However, the same function also allows SSA operators to see the form of a space object and make certain determinations about its function. Likewise, other companies are using radio signals to produce maps that show signal broadcasts between the Earth and orbit. This will be especially useful as jamming capabilities become more prevalent.

Finally, the third development in space situational awareness is better computing. Governments and companies are using faster computers, machine learning and even cloud computing to process significantly more data than ever before. Artificial intelligence is also being used to optimize the use of sensors all over the world, allowing a single system to fuse data from many different sources. These fused data are enabling the production of many SSA products, including catalogues of space objects, conjunction analysis and even threat assessments.

It should also be noted that there is increasing cooperation in space situational awareness. More actors are sharing data than ever before. By adding multiple layers of data, it is possible to collect a better picture of an object’s activities and, to a degree, its capabilities. With more sensors sharing disparate data, it is possible not only to detect an object but also to identify it. To identify an object, one must know what it can do and to whom it belongs.

Now, unlike many civilian SSA systems, which mainly focus on detection, military SSA operators have for many years been investing in characterizing objects in space, including their capabilities and limitations. Numerous studies in this field have generated programmes that employ machine learning to identify and track objects in space. This methodology can develop specific profiles and templates that can later be used to characterize similar objects. As some of you will have already seen, my colleague, now a UNIDIR non-resident fellow, Dr. Moriba Jah, is presently engaged in this work at the University of Texas at Austin. It is his expert opinion that the tools needed to identify space objects accurately already exist – it is just a question of linking the right pieces together.

By being able to characterize space objects, it is also possible to make a threat assessment. In risk management fields, a threat is identified by intent, opportunity and capability. As such, a number of SSA operators are developing algorithms that can calculate what space objects are at risk from other nearby objects. This is done by sifting through millions of possible trajectories and identifying those targets that represent an

opportunity for suspected capabilities. One company in particular, Analytical Graphics, Inc., already sells this analysis as an SSA product for its clients.

While this threat analysis can spot opportunities and possibly capabilities, it still cannot determine intent. However, there is research in this area as well. Space Strategies Consulting, which I mentioned earlier, was recently awarded a grant from the Canadian Government to develop an artificial intelligence program capable of combing the Internet for contextual data around a particular space object. This is not unlike traditional intelligence gathering, only done at a much wider level and at a much faster rate. By building up contextual evidence around a space object, such as launch notifications, payload descriptions and even space policies, it might be possible to build a case about intent, just as a detective would in a criminal investigation. While this may not lead to direct evidence of intent, it can still add clarity to the nature of a space object when combined with empirical data.

Now, what does this all mean?

First, it is likely that, in the near future, there will be near persistent eyes in the sky. There will be so many sensors around the world and in space that it will be extremely difficult to hide any space activities. Moreover, different SSA operators will be able to cross-check information with each other. Second, the types of SSA measurements are diversifying, so more and different data will be able to add colour and contrast to our current picture of space activities. Finally, it is likely that new computer programmes will enable at least some meaningful evidence gathering in relation to intent. While not perfect, it will still provide useful information for threat assessments.

So what can be done with all this technology?

As noted at the outset of this presentation, the aim of this survey is to extrapolate what might be the scope of an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Even if not everything can be verified, perhaps at least some space security threats can be.

To date, the only proposal for an agreement that requires effective verification is the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space. This is a comprehensive ban on all weapons in space and sets a very high bar for verification. The scope of this proposal is problematic because of the dual-use/multi-use nature of certain space objects. For example, a co-orbital vehicle capable of removing space debris might also remove a fully functional satellite in an aggressive or hostile manner. An SSA system today could detect and even correctly identify the full range of capabilities of a co-orbital vehicle in a timely manner but be under the false impression that the object's mission is repairs or refuelling only. In the geosynchronous orbit, where objects are relatively close, a co-orbital vehicle might attack a nearby satellite before an operator can respond. In this context, it would seem that while SSA technology has progressed a long way, it is still not sufficiently sophisticated for an effective verification system for the comprehensive prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

However, barring this high standard, it is worth considering what other, less ambitious approaches might be verifiable. One approach is to look at restrictions for certain behaviours.

One option is the prohibition of the intentional destruction of objects in orbit. We already know that launches and on-orbit break-ups are detectable, so these activities could be monitored. However, this would not meet our criteria for a verification system, since detection would be possible only after a satellite is destroyed, or multiple satellites are destroyed. There would be no time to deny an adversary the benefit of the violation, especially if there are many satellites destroyed at once. As a result, this approach is also not suitable if effective verification is essential.

Another similar option might be the prohibition of destructive anti-satellite weapon tests. These activities can be detected and monitored, and the destruction of a single space object would not necessarily give an adversary an advantage. Testing could still be done with virtual targets that do not generate debris. This approach could also be widely acceptable to the international community, not least of all since it is the major space Powers that have the most to lose from the creation of debris through anti-satellite weapon testing. Civil and commercial space operators would also likely support this approach.

Satellites are not destroyed only by missiles, though. They can also be destroyed by co-orbital vehicles. While it is now possible to track even small co-orbital vehicles in geosynchronous orbit, it is still difficult to know exactly what their intentions are. In order to reduce the perception of threats from these objects, it might be possible to set a minimum distance which other space objects cannot encroach upon. If they do, a party wishing to protect its asset can take preventative or deterring measures, either in space or on the ground. Likewise, it can also be prohibited to place too many objects in the vicinity of any one system's objects. For example, there can be a prohibition against one actor putting too many co-orbital vehicles near satellites belonging to the same constellation, such as the Global Positioning System (GPS) constellation. By restricting how close space objects can come to one another and how many objects can approach at once, it could be possible to detect a threat with enough time for a targeted party to react, even if the reaction is not in space. Of all the options, this approach could have the highest level of performance in terms of detecting a violation in a timely manner. It would be up to the international community, though, to determine what distance, or how many approaching vehicles, constitutes a militarily meaningful threat.

There are other benefits to setting a minimum standard for safe distances between satellites. For one, such a provision would likely be acceptable if incorporated into a wider space traffic management framework. Indeed, today, there is a widespread call for greater regulation of space activities as the rate of placing objects in orbit increases, especially in low Earth orbit. Even commercial actors are calling for new regulations that define the "rules of the road" for Earth's increasingly congested orbits. Devising space traffic management rules, including safe distances based on security concerns, could be more acceptable to the international community than trying to prohibit the deployment of specific classes of weaponized technology. There might also be a greater appetite for a global SSA network if it is intended to service space traffic management writ large rather than having a system exclusively for security threats. In this context, new rules would not have to be discussed in the Conference on Disarmament, where – let's face it – discussions are moving rather slowly. The international community could discuss and develop a global space traffic management regime in other forums, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This would have the additional benefit of bringing a diverse range of actors and resources to the negotiations, including civil space agencies, commercial actors and academia. Such support could be instrumental in reaching the necessary political will to adopt formal rules for space activities.

In conclusion, it is true that SSA technology has developed considerably over the last 10 years. While there have been advances in the number and quality of sensors and in computing power, the technology still does not meet the standards required for a comprehensive ban on weapons in space. However, there are less ambitious approaches that could be the subject of effectively verifiable agreements today. The first is a prohibition on destructive anti-satellite weapon tests. The second would be the setting of safe distances for satellites, as well as a limit on the number of objects that can approach a single system. Both of these options could be included in a global space traffic management system that sets rules of the road not only for military space actors, but for all. By setting standards of conduct, it will be easier to spot the outliers that might pose a threat to other space objects. By making these approaches part of a larger framework, it might be possible to achieve a stronger space security regime without facing many of the polemic issues that often block progress in dialogues today.

If you would like further information on this, we will be publishing our report on verification later this fall. I would also encourage you to read the key takeaways from the space security report which we have just published. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Daniel Porras for his presentation. I would like to express our sincere thanks to our panellists for their very detailed, thoughtful and, of course, in-depth presentations on the topic. I will now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Liddle** (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, and let me join you in thanking the panellists for their input to our discussion this afternoon.

Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the following countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand and my own, the United

Kingdom. Today, the world is ever more reliant on space assets for its prosperity and its security. The development of space technology is already bringing tremendous benefits to all nations in areas such as Earth observation for agriculture, global positioning for ships and aircraft, remote sensing for climate change, telecommunications and weather monitoring. However, the vast potential of space is as yet unrealized.

The desire to tap this potential, combined with recent innovation, has significantly reduced the costs of launch. This is allowing more and more countries to become spacefaring nations and more and more commercial companies to access and operate in space.

However, the more assets there are in space, the more congested it becomes, with greater potential for collisions, more debris and the potential for fewer sustainable orbits. With the increasing democratization of space, all actors will need to take responsibility for keeping space a stable, safe and sustainable environment. In many cases, the threats to space arise not just from the object but from a lack of communication between operators or knowledge of the intentions of the operator. A sustainable environment means that current actors can continue to operate with minimal disruption, while new spacefaring nations and companies will be assured that the domain will remain accessible in the future.

In a recent Wilton Park conference, experts from 13 countries, including ours, considered how norms of behaviour could help mitigate the threats and keep space sustainable and safe for all. The conference considered four focus areas for possible development of agreed norms of State behaviour, which can be summarized as follows.

First, launch: given the rapid growth in the launch industry, existing space actors have identified the need to ensure that minimum safety standards are agreed and met, that timely notifications are published and that operators explain what their spacecraft will do and the effects they will have.

Second, debris mitigation and management: the problem of space debris needs to be addressed on a global scale and requires coordination between Governments and commercial space actors. It is a challenging issue, but requiring operators to take debris-mitigation measures that cover all phases of space operations, including design, pre-launch, operation and mission disposal would help.

Third, space situational awareness: to keep space sustainable and safe, there is a need to promote the consistent exchange of data regarding objects and events in space and to improve the quality of those data. As more and more data become available, we need to ensure that they are independently sourced, verifiable and accurate. Sharing not only outputs but also algorithms builds trust. We also need better lines of communication between operators for conjunction incidents.

Fourth, in-orbit and proximity operations: when one object approaches another, it can be a cause for concern, especially if the approaching object is non-cooperative. With the development of on-orbit servicing and active debris removal capabilities, objects will increasingly be in close proximity to each other. In order to mitigate the risks of miscalculation, it will be important to develop guidelines setting out operating standards for on-orbit servicing and active debris removal. It will also be crucial to have open lines of communication for incidents where a miscalculation could lead to a perception of a threat to an object.

The United Kingdom has submitted the full report on the Wilton Park conference, entitled "Operating in space: towards developing protocols on the norms of behaviour", as an official document (CD/2164) of the Conference on Disarmament. The Wilton Park conference did not claim to have all the answers; indeed, the report poses many important questions that will need to be carefully considered for each norm. However, a key takeaway from the conference was that global solutions require all space actors to work together to share data, improve communications, design their missions and space assets to mitigate debris, agree to improved standards for launches and establish minimum processes before undertaking new and innovative operations.

Mr. President, in order to maintain outer space for the benefit of all, we need to reach an understanding about how to address threats to its security and sustainability. The verification challenge is well known – there are limits to what can be verified once an asset has been launched. There is no common understanding on what we mean by a space

weapon, and any object with manoeuvring capabilities can, in theory, be used for offensive purposes. Instead, we should look to reach a common understanding of responsible behaviour in space. As a start, the Conference on Disarmament could encourage all spacefaring nations to present their national space policies and their national regulations for commercial and other actors. Encouraging this type of exchange could play a crucial role in reducing the risk of conflict in space.

Mr. President, we welcome the adoption by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in June of a preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. This shows that the Committee is capable of setting international space norms. We look forward to discussing how to put these guidelines into practical effect, as well as considering topics for further guidelines.

As we consider how to move forward on space, our countries continue to believe that the best way to address the threats posed by assets in space at this stage is through the development of non-legally binding instruments or norms of behaviour. Any new multilateral process on space should consider the fundamental issues of intent and behaviour in space, as the most effective means of ensuring space remains safe, sustainable and for the benefit of all.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President. Let me first start by thanking you and your team for your very good and hard work during your presidency to try to bring about a consensus in the Conference. I would also like to thank the panellists for their presentations.

Mr. President, the United States has explained in detail, many times our concerns about definitions and about verification related to objects in outer space and especially related to the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space that has been submitted to this body by Russia and China. We have previously provided lengthy examinations of the fundamental flaws in the draft Treaty, some of which have just been outlined by Daniel Porras.

Instead of repeating those arguments at length, I would like to apply the provisions of the draft of the so-called Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space to some real-world examples of weapon systems – specifically ground-based weapons – that are designed to damage, destroy or disrupt the on-orbit functioning of spacecraft in order to further the debate in this body. I hope colleagues will find this approach to be illustrative of the challenges we face in considering this issue in the Conference on Disarmament. I hope, too, to provide a sense of how the draft Treaty, in its current form, will not enhance international peace and security and to discuss some pragmatic steps we could take to actually enhance the security of the outer space environment.

Let me start with the threat to outer space objects. Despite what the proponents of the draft Treaty would have us believe, right now, the greatest threat to satellites is not from weapons in outer space but from ground-based anti-satellite weapons that are designed to destroy, damage or disrupt the normal functioning of objects in outer space. The defenders of the draft Treaty would have us believe that the provisions of article II of the draft text would in fact prohibit these types of ground-based threat. They point to the language in article II that would obligate parties “not to resort to the threat or use of force against outer space objects of States parties to the Treaty”.

But what everyone in this room should understand is that, despite these claims, nothing in the draft Treaty, including in article II, prohibits the development, testing, production, storage or deployment of these ground-based anti-satellite weapons. More importantly, despite the grave concerns expressed over the threat to objects in space, these are precisely the types of weapons that Russia and China are developing and deploying today.

So let us look at some examples of the types of actual ground-based systems that are being developed and in some cases already fielded. Again, and this is an important point, these systems whose development and deployment would not be banned under the draft

Treaty are systems that are being developed by the very same States pushing for the adoption of the Treaty.

First, let us start with Russia and its development of a system that is designed to disrupt or damage outer space objects. Last year, Russian President Putin announced the deployment of a ground-based laser weapon called Peresvet Combat Laser Complex. Russia's Ministry of Defence has publicly stated that this system is designed to "fight satellites". Our Russian colleagues have not explained what they mean by "fight satellites", but the United States believes that this means the Peresvet laser is designed to either disrupt or damage the normal functioning of another nation's satellites. And I would just recommend to colleagues that the next time you have a chance to speak with a colleague from the Russian delegation, you ask them about the Peresvet laser. Again, the proponents of the draft Treaty claim that the paragraph on the threat or use of force would prohibit the development of any weapon that would be used against outer space objects, including ground-based lasers that are designed to damage a satellite. Yet here we have the President of Russia actively proclaiming that his country has just such a capability, with no explanation of how Russia's development of these systems, which threaten outer space objects, is consistent with its public-facing push for space arms control.

Second, let me address a system that is designed to "destroy" outer space objects per the definition in the draft Treaty. As many of you in this room know, in 2007, China launched a ground-based missile that intentionally destroyed a Chinese weather satellite and created 3,000 pieces of debris in orbit, because the Chinese missile was designed to strike the satellite using kinetic force. Most of this debris remains in orbit today, posing an indiscriminate threat to all spacecraft in low Earth orbit. Now, our Chinese colleagues have been one of the main proponents of the concept that the language in the draft Treaty on the threat or use of force would prohibit the development and deployment of ground-launched systems. Yet the United States judges that China has moved forward with the deployment of the missile system it tested in 2007. Like Russia, China has never tried to reconcile its development of this system with its outward-facing push for space arms control. The very fact that China is deploying such a weapon suggests that China is willing to use it during a conflict. And the implications of the use of such a debris-generating weapon for the security and long-term sustainability of the outer space environment are tremendous. Just as important is the fact that Russia is developing a similar ground-based anti-satellite missile. Such ground-based anti-satellite weapons are destabilizing and a significant threat to the outer space environment. If they were truly serious about wanting to prevent conflict from extending into space, then Russia and China would abandon their pursuit of such systems.

It is clear from these examples that Russia and China believe it is currently acceptable to attack satellites in orbit from the ground, whether through directed energy or missile strikes. At the same time, they hypocritically profess their concern about attacks on satellites and serve as the main proponents of the draft Treaty.

In addition, I want to remind my colleagues of a speech the United States gave to this body exactly one year ago today about the on-orbit activities of a Russian Ministry of Defence satellite. This satellite exhibited abnormal behaviour and raised questions for the United States about Russia's intent. The behaviour was so inconsistent with the satellite's stated purpose that it could cause observers to question Russia's political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space, which it would also be prohibited from doing under the draft Treaty. I might also point out that "no first placement" is probably not the appropriate term, because, as many of us know in this room, back in the 1970s the Soviet Union deployed co-orbital anti-satellite systems. So I think it is probably more appropriate to call it "no second placement".

These examples demonstrate that there is not an arms control solution to this issue at this time and that the fundamentally flawed draft Treaty has not been, is not and never will be the solution to the many threats facing the space environment. Instead, these examples serve to remind us that very significant differences remain regarding important, fundamental issues such as definitions of what is a weapon and how the draft Treaty applies to ground-based weapons. Moreover, we must conclude that the countries professing to support efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space have hypocritically and cynically decided to proceed with the development of ground-based anti-satellite weapons, anyway.

For its part, consistent with its efforts to strengthen stability in outer space, the United States will continue to pursue bilateral and multilateral transparency and

confidence-building measures to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space, including through the development and advancement of norms of behaviour in outer space and best practices for space operations.

In this regard, I want to applaud the remarks of our United Kingdom colleague and welcome the United Kingdom's submission of the report on its 2019 Wilton Park conference on space security. This report is an important food-for-thought paper for this body's consideration of effective, voluntary and pragmatic transparency and confidence-building measures and related guidelines defining responsible behaviour in outer space.

The remarks by our colleague from the United Kingdom highlight an important point: that space flight safety is a global challenge and that it is in everyone's best interest to continue to encourage safe and responsible behaviour in space, while emphasizing the need for international transparency. In an effort to increase the sharing of data on satellite positions and to reduce the risk of collisions, the United States is now implementing a comprehensive policy for space traffic management, otherwise known as STM.

I would also underscore the point our United Kingdom colleague made regarding the importance of development guidelines for on-orbit servicing. The United States has already assisted in establishing an industry-led effort called the Consortium for Execution of Rendezvous and Servicing Operations, which in February 2019 released a report on recommended design and operational practices. Voluntary efforts such as the Consortium offer technically based and scientifically sound ideas for States and space operators. These efforts are preferable alternatives to vague and unverifiable agreements that may have unforeseen negative impacts on novel or beneficial economic uses of space.

In this regard, we believe the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have roles to play in the process of developing these transparency and confidence-building measures and best practices, taking into account the respective mandates of each body and with appropriate coordination to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts within the United Nations system.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

**Mr. Nikolaichik** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we wish to congratulate you on convening a special meeting on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space. Please allow us also to say a word of appreciation to the Ambassadors of Russia and Chile and to the representative of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their comprehensive, informative reports.

Belarus considers the prevention of an arms race in outer space to be one of the main priorities in the field of international security, arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. We are committed to rigorous compliance with and the universalization and development of substantive international legal instruments to regulate States' activities in outer space.

Belarus supports the "no first placement of weapons in outer space" initiative. We think that universal support for the initiative will ensure that nobody will come "second" and we call on all States to join it.

Even in comparison with 2018, the situation is starting to shift towards a more active development and testing of the corresponding weapon technology. The world is virtually on the threshold of an arms race in outer space. In this connection, we consider that the call for the preventive elimination of existing legal lacunae is a matter of unprecedented urgency. We support the stepping-up of efforts to draw up an international agreement banning the weaponization of outer space.

In this context, we appreciate the work performed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The experts worked hard on analysing and discussing the basic components of a possible international treaty.

Let us continue to support the Russo-Chinese draft treaty to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer space.



As a member of the Group of Governmental Experts, Belarus would like to say that discussions drew heavily on this draft, which might serve as a good basis for starting talks about the drafting of a corresponding international legal instrument. We likewise appreciate the flexibility of the experts from Russia and China and their readiness to look for compromise solutions during the Group's work. We regret the fact that political reasons made it impossible to agree on the Group's report. We are sure that the Group's work can make a positive contribution to the Conference's deliberations.

We urge the members of the Conference to set up an appropriate subsidiary body during the 2020 session and to ensure continuity in the Conference's work in sessions thereafter.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

**Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan):** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Allow me to begin by thanking you for convening this meeting on this topic and expressing our gratitude to the panellists for their detailed presentations and valuable contributions.

Mr. President, outer space is being explored and used by an increasing number of States both for civilian and military purposes. While our dependence on outer space is on the rise, the risk of its weaponization is also growing. We are becoming increasingly concerned by the threats posed by anti-satellite capabilities to regional and global stability as well as to the long-term sustainability of outer space. In the absence of strong legal instruments regulating the testing, development and deployment of anti-satellite weapons, other States could also follow suit by demonstrating such capabilities. The potential integration of anti-ballistic missile systems and their components into space assets adds another worrying dimension to this matter.

There is an urgent need to prevent outer space from emerging as a new realm of conflict or setting for an arms race. Being a strong proponent of the non-weaponization of outer space, Pakistan reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to immediately commence substantive work on the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space to comprehensively address the gaps in the international legal regime governing the exploration and use of outer space.

Having been on the Conference's agenda for over three and a half decades, the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space is eminently ripe for commencement of negotiations. The draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, tabled jointly by China and Russia, provides a useful basis for that.

The countries presently enjoying dominance in outer space should not be blinded by this perception. Their current technological prowess will not be able to last forever. Other countries are catching up rapidly. And this time, the developing countries will neither carry the burden of non-proliferation nor accept any discriminatory restrictions which hamper their pursuits in outer space.

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 recognized that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and should be the province of all humanity – that is, our common heritage. The Treaty prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space but is silent on the placement of other types of weapons, including conventional weapons that could be used to engage targets on Earth or in outer space. Moreover, it does not prohibit the use of force against outer space objects from Earth. These issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive treaty on prevention of an arms race in outer space negotiated in the Conference.

Mr. President, Pakistan welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. A Pakistani expert was part of the Group and contributed to its work in a substantive and constructive manner. The Group was quite close to fulfilling its mandate by making recommendations on substantial elements of an international legally binding instrument. We were disappointed that consensus could not be reached and that the Group failed to approve its final report.

Mr. President, as announced by my delegation at the Conference plenary meeting on 28 May, the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and the Russian Federation signed a joint statement on no first placement of weapons in outer space. This is a practical manifestation of our commitment to “not in any way be the first to place weapons of any kind in outer space” and to make all possible efforts to prevent outer space from becoming an arena for military confrontation and to ensure security in outer space activities. We also encourage other responsible spacefaring nations to follow this example.

Lastly, let me emphasize, Mr. President, that while recognizing the value of transparency and confidence-building measures in promoting trust and confidence among States, Pakistan does not see voluntary measures as a substitute for legally binding treaty-based obligations. There are clear gaps in the international legal regime governing the use of outer space which can be filled only by a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space that prohibits the placement of weapons in outer space as well as by banning the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

**Mr. Li Song (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, first of all, with regard to the unreasonable accusations just made by the Ambassador of the United States of America concerning the national defence policy of China and the construction of our national defences, we should like to express our firm opposition, and we cannot accept them. Since my return to the Conference in January of this year, I have on numerous occasions taken the opportunity to fully set out my country’s defence and foreign policies in this forum, including our policies regarding multilateral arms control. I would like to reiterate that China follows a national defence policy that is defensive in nature. We are committed to the peaceful use of outer space and we have actively urged the international community to immediately undertake work to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an arms race, calling for the conclusion of an international treaty to that end. Our country’s policies, proposals and actions fully demonstrate that it has no strategy or plan to seek dominance in outer space through the use of force or by employing weapons systems there.

China and the vast majority of the members of the international community attach a great deal of importance to outer space and tirelessly push for the Conference to negotiate and conclude an international treaty to prevent its weaponization and an arms race. On the one hand, this is because outer space technology is developing at a feverish pace and thus affects the legitimate security interests of every member of the international community, and also the broader interests of economic and social development. Another important reason is the strategy of a major power, the one that took the floor just now criticizing China, which is aimed at securing dominance in outer space. As the world’s strongest military superpower, what is that country’s view of outer space? What are its intentions for outer space? What kind of strategic plan does it have? What kind of capabilities is it developing in outer space? Whether its military capabilities are based on the ground or in outer space, they are capable of threatening the assets of other countries there. Its every move in outer space has an impact on the entire world. What kind of space strategy does this country have? There is no need for me to repeat it here. There are plentiful sources for all to see, and everyone has had every opportunity to gain a full understanding of this strategy from the repeated statements made by that country, especially regarding the present Government’s strategy of strengthening the weaponization of outer space. This even includes the explicit establishment of a space force and a space command, and so on and so forth. I would like to take this opportunity to ask our expert from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) whether his Institute too is carrying out research on this question. You, the genuine professional experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, what is your interpretation of the outer space strategy and weapons programme of the United States? What sort of damage does it do? Do you carry out any research on this question?

When the Ambassador of the United States was serving as president of the Conference, I said during a thematic discussion that China was not the United States, China would not become the United States, and China would not follow the nuclear strategy of the United States. This applies to questions related to outer space as well. Unlike the United States, China will never regard outer space as its own dominion and then consider all other countries’ activities in this area as a threat, or use the so-called threats posed by other

countries as a pretext for the further development of an outer space strategy of domination. As for the accusations levelled by the United States delegation against China just now, I would like to ask the United States Ambassador a few questions. He just now made accusations about so-called testing activities and weapons development programmes. Has the United States carried out such activities? Does it have such plans? For quite a while now the United States has had the most advanced military capability in outer space, both during the arms race at the time of the cold war and since the end of the cold war. How many of the actions that you mentioned have been carried out by your own country? I have another question for the United States delegation. How would your country respond in the context of multilateral arms control if it was not the United States but another country that was acting as I have just described, seeking dominance in outer space, with the strongest military force, and posing the greatest threat to security in outer space?

I wish to emphasize the reason why China is working to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space, and why China, together with the Russian Federation, put forward a draft treaty in the Conference. The United Nations General Assembly resolution that we have proposed has received overwhelming support every time it has come before the General Assembly, thus demonstrating the serious concern of the international community on this subject. Our action aims to address the greatest and most far-reaching threats related to outer space. It is aimed at any country that has a strategy, plan or weapons development programme to seek dominance in outer space. That is what our action on this question aims to address.

As for the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space that has been proposed by China and the Russian Federation, as a sponsor, we in the Chinese delegation know that it is not a comprehensive prescription capable of resolving all the issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space; it cannot provide a remedy to all the problems. Different countries have different ways of thinking about these threats. I can only say that the draft treaty proposed by China and the Russian Federation captures the specific logic of our two countries on this question, according to which we believe that it is possible to resolve the issues of the weaponization and arms race in outer space both quickly, and at as early a date as possible. Obviously, others will have a different logic, and we welcome them coming to question and discuss the content of our draft. The United States has submitted a very detailed working paper on our text, with questions about its content, and China and the Russian Federation have put forward a formal working paper in the Conference in response to the questions raised by the United States. I consider such exchanges, including some of the comments made today by the United States Ambassador on the draft treaty, to be participation by the United States in the discussion of the draft put forward by China and the Russian Federation.

On the question of verification under the draft treaty, the draft clearly states that the issue of verification can be resolved, in the future, in the form of an additional protocol. Just look at the Biological Weapons Convention. That Convention has already been in effect for many years, and everyone is still working hard on a verification protocol for it. It thus cannot be said that our draft treaty is not a good instrument merely because, for the time being, it lacks a verification clause. In his speech today, the expert from UNIDIR also addressed this issue. We have always said that the Chinese-Russian draft is not the Conference's only basis for substantive discussions on issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is not our intention to impose the Chinese-Russian draft on anyone. In the Conference, owing to political difficulties, the complexity of the international political and security environment and especially the opposition of the relevant major countries to the core spirit of the Chinese-Russian draft treaty, the Conference has been slow to start substantive work on issues related to outer space.

We are pleased to see that the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on further effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space has carried out very effective work in the past two years. This year, in Geneva, we have had discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space both in the Conference and at the UNIDIR Space Security Conference, and the two-week meeting in Geneva of the Group of Governmental Experts added important content on this subject. China sent government experts to take part in that meeting. My colleague informed me that this meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts held the most comprehensive and in-depth exchange on outer space within the United Nations framework for many years. The Group could have adopted a very comprehensive report, but it fell short of adoption owing to the opposition

of just one party, again, the United States. So I would like to ask the United States Ambassador another question: on what basis did the United States alone oppose such an important work of the Group? We hear that its opposition is based on the fact that the concerns of the United States were not accommodated in the Group's report. What precisely were those concerns? Did you want to add something to the Group's report, or did you object to seeing something in it? Anyway, this report is now available. While it is a report that has not been adopted by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts, its value resides in the fact that the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community have accepted it and the overwhelming majority of the members of the Conference have approved it.

We are pleased to see that during the last thematic discussion on the prevention of an arms race in outer space that took place in the Conference, the President of the Conference at the time, the Permanent Representative of Venezuela, specifically invited the Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. De Aguiar Patriota, to address the Conference as the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, to brief everyone on the Group's work and provide some information on all the multilateral efforts it was carrying out in relation to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I believe Ambassador De Aguiar Patriota left a deep impression on everyone when he spoke from this rostrum. Now he has left his post for Mumbai, to enjoy life. But as we were sending him off, I remember hearing him say on numerous occasions that he had been invited, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts, by the President of the Conference to deliver this speech to the Conference, and that for him, as an Ambassador for disarmament questions, it was one of the most important acts he could perform before he left. He considered it an important part of discharging his duties as Chair to comprehensively set out his ideas, from the perspective of the Chair, to the member States of the Conference.

It is my hope that I, my team and our colleagues present here will be able, like Ambassador De Aguiar Patriota, to devote ourselves to carrying out substantive work on outer space issues here at the Conference. Even if it is not easy to reach a consensus about commencing negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we can at least begin substantive work in the Conference as soon as possible on these questions, in a spirit of true professionalism, with a realistic approach and with full respect for each and every country and for their positions, concerns and opinions. If we do, I believe we can, on the basis of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, continue to devote ourselves to carrying out substantive work on all aspects of outer space issues and prepare for the start of negotiations in the future.

I hope that the Conference, when formulating its programme of work for next year, can give full attention to questions related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The more we face practical difficulties in these questions, the more arduous the process of drafting an arms control treaty to prevent the weaponization of outer space and the more resistance we encounter from certain powerful countries, the more we must insist on our goal of preventing the weaponization of outer space and an arms race there. We must do whatever we can in the Conference. It is my hope and my conviction that this is the common call of the vast majority of the Conference's members. My team and I will continue to make consistent efforts to that end. Thank you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement.

Yesterday I informed you that this will be the last plenary meeting under my presidency. We have now only officially less than 15 minutes more, and there are seven speakers in my list. I thus encourage all those delegations on the speaking list to be succinct, so that we can conclude. If not, I can organize another plenary meeting for tomorrow to finish the list of speakers and then conclude the session. That is my appeal. We will go through the list now, and if we cannot finish, we will go further in a plenary meeting tomorrow. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Now I give the floor to the representative of France.

**Ms. Delaroche** (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. I will come directly to my point in order to save time, as you suggested, and would like to say a few words about France's new space defence strategy, which was published on 25 July and presented that same day by the Minister for the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, and which was developed in response to a request by the President of the Republic last year.

Space is an essential environment for the functioning of our society and its security. Today, at a time when it is ever more the subject of conflict, when we are witnessing its creeping weaponization and when it is increasingly being invaded by private actors, space is at the heart of a strategic competition that concerns both its civilian and its military applications and threatens our freedoms of access and action.

A renewed analysis of the space environment, the threats and risks associated with space and the recognition of the strategic nature of space capabilities justify France's adaptation of its strategy. I do not believe that the existence of increasing threats is questioned by the international community. Our new space defence strategy aims to bolster our strategic autonomy in this area in three ways: by strengthening our current military capabilities in terms of strategic intelligence and operations support, by extending space situational awareness capabilities to monitor activity in all orbits, and, finally, by developing our space defence capacity. A priority of this strategy is to boost knowledge of the space environment on the ground, but also in space, so that we can better understand and characterize threats. France will also have to strengthen its means of protecting and defending its space capabilities, and – I insist on this point – our strategy is exclusively defensive. To meet this renewed ambition, space governance within the Ministry of the Armed Forces must be reviewed. It will be visibly embodied in a major space command attached to the Air Force, which will thus become the Air and Space Forces. The implementation of this strategy should enable us to deepen cooperation with our partners in Europe and beyond. Indeed, our strategy can be conceived only within a framework of partnership. It therefore provides for the strengthening of our space cooperation in all areas with our European and other key partners. Space has an international legal framework guaranteeing freedom of exploration and access, and its peaceful use. Our strategy is consistent with both these fundamental principles and with the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

Lastly, diplomatic efforts to strengthen these principles are an integral part of our strategy. France wants to commit itself fully to its actions within international bodies devoted to space in order to bring about pragmatic and effective regulation of the space environment. This requires a special effort to develop standards of behaviour to guarantee strategic stability and avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or escalation. We are at your disposal to work with all States interested in this objective, and I refer you here to our statement of 13 June. In conclusion, as the Minister for the Armed Forces stressed, we are in no way engaged in an arms race, and our priority is to continue our diplomatic efforts.

And finally, Mr. President, a word to you and your team, on behalf of my Ambassador, of course, to thank you for all your efforts, which have been greatly appreciated.

**The President:** I thank the representative of France for her statement and I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil

**Mr. Dalcero (Brazil):** Thank you, Mr. President. Brazil attaches great importance to this agenda item of the Conference on Disarmament. No conflict in outer space has yet materialized. However, we cannot take for granted that this record is enough to guarantee peace, particularly at a time when the use of space by both traditional and new actors is increasing. It seems reasonable to believe that this increase will result in a proliferation of space objects which in turn will lead to risks that are more significant.

We are now at the threshold of a new space age, one that can once again inspire generations to come to explore new possibilities. We will only achieve this if we are able to ensure the collective management of challenges in space through true cooperation. Brazil recognized this fact already in the 1960s, and cooperation has been one of the cornerstones of our space programme. We were the third country in the world to receive images from Landsat 1. Since the 1970s, in partnership with agencies in the United States, Brazilian scientific institutions have developed remote sense solutions to monitor deforestation and agriculture across the globe, and we share our expertise with other interested parties.

In 1988, Brazil and China initiated the development of the China and Brazil Earth resource remote-sensing family of satellites and will be launching the sixth device in the series this November. We partnered with Russia to improve the reliability and accuracy of the Global Navigation Satellite System. Brazil also supports the open universe initiative proposed by Italy and developed together with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, which will also use astronomical data to deliver benefits to humankind.

As you know, Mr. President, in the last 18 months, Brazil has had the opportunity to be deeply involved in three multilateral processes related to space activities. In 2018, Brazil, through the former Special Representative to the Conference, Ambassador Guilherme Patriota, chaired subsidiary body 3 of the Conference, which approved by consensus a final report, contained in document CD/2140. In this document, I would like to highlight the need, expressed by many delegations, for the Conference's work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space to be steered by the objectives of keeping outer space safe, secure, stable and sustainable and preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict.

Technological developments that are revolutionizing the uses of outer space, together with the expansion of access beyond the traditional spacefaring Powers and State actors, are both an opportunity and a risk, especially if we do not understand, monitor and adequately frame new capabilities, uses, vulnerabilities and threats. There are growing concerns both over actions that could trigger misinterpretations and miscalculations and over deliberate and intentional use of force in outer space, from outer space or from terrestrial platforms against outer space objects.

Another initiative in which Brazil had the privilege to participate in in 2018 and 2019 was the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, also chaired by the same Brazilian diplomat. In spite of the non-approval of the final report, the text, thoroughly negotiated within the Group until the removal of the last pair of brackets, constitutes an important contribution that each of the 25 experts will have at their disposal in their respective capitals in order to improve positions and seek greater convergence when the future debate on prevention of an arms race in outer space is resumed. In view of the growing importance of the issue for international peace and security, we believe that the exercise afforded opportunities for the most relevant interactions among space Powers in recent years in a strategic theme of extreme sensitivity.

Finally, last June, Brazil presided at the sixty-second session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which adopted a preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. These provide guidance on policy and regulatory frameworks for space activities, safety of space operations, international cooperation, capacity-building and awareness and scientific and technical research and development.

The consequences of a potential conflict in outer space would affect all of us. Therefore, we must recognize that we should consider ways to address, handle and prevent incidents from increasing tensions. In this regard, we welcome the joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees that will take place this year during the United Nations General Assembly. Bringing together these two communities is a constructive approach that helps increase awareness of the importance of preserving space for peaceful uses. We would also like to highlight the commitments undertaken by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in his Agenda for Disarmament, including to have the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and other United Nations bodies deepen their engagement with Member States on the elaboration of effective measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Brazil has a decades-long commitment to cooperation in outer space. The three processes in which we have participated in the last 18 months are a testament to this commitment at the multilateral level.

Mr. President, I have questions for the panel, but I do not believe that we are going to have time.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. He will also pose his questions to the panel tomorrow. Now, distinguished delegates, it is exactly 6 p.m. and we still have on our speakers' list the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba, Japan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation. I will adjourn this meeting now and ask the secretariat to inform you that tomorrow morning, at 10 a.m., we will start our 1518th plenary meeting, at which we will continue our panel discussion. After the panel discussion, I will conclude the plenary meeting and Viet Nam's presidency.

I would like once again to thank you, but I would like also to thank the panellists for taking the time to come tomorrow, so that we can have a very fruitful panel discussion for tomorrow morning. The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*