
Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and forty-ninth plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Vaanchig Purevdorj.....(Mongolia)

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The President: I call to order the 1349th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to suspend the meeting briefly so that I may go to the Salon Français to welcome our distinguished guest, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: I would like to extend a warm welcome to our guest of today, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and thank him for addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure and honour to invite Mr. Tuomioja to take the floor.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): I am truly delighted to be able to address the Conference on Disarmament today. Yesterday we celebrated International Women's Day, and it is a good reminder for us that we need to further strengthen the participation and inclusion of women in all disarmament and arms control work in the spirit of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

This year is a special one in disarmament, and I understand that you heard statements by several of my colleagues last week. We will have, among others, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May and the first conference of the States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in August.

After years of hard work, the Arms Trade Treaty finally entered into force in December last year. This is a significant achievement for the international community. With this historic treaty we take a major step forward in controlling the use of conventional arms and small arms and light weapons that kill hundreds of thousands of people — men, women and children — every year. The Treaty can contribute to creating a more secure and stable environment for everyone, everywhere. In implementing the Treaty we enhance the principles of human rights and contribute to a more peaceful and just world.

The rapid entry into force of the Treaty serves as evidence that the international community is ready and willing to regulate the trade in arms and to reduce the illicit trade in arms. While this is a great achievement, our work is far from over. It is only through effective implementation at the national level that the Treaty will make a difference. The preparations for the first conference of the States parties, to be held in Mexico, are well under way. It is highly desirable that all decisions supporting the implementation of the Treaty will be duly taken at that meeting.

We must not forget that the success of the Treaty and its potential benefits also depend on its universality. So far, 130 countries have signed and 63 countries have ratified the Treaty. I call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and accede to the Treaty as soon as possible.

Another key event this year is the NPT Review Conference. The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the international arms control regime. All NPT members have commitments and shared responsibilities in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses. The Review Conference provides an opportunity to reflect on how agreed actions and commitments have been fulfilled across these pillars.

We acknowledge the decline in nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war, mostly through bilateral efforts by the two nuclear Powers with the largest arsenals. We encourage the Russian Federation and the United States of America to seek further reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons, including in non-strategic nuclear arsenals, and place them under a legally binding verifiable international treaty system.

Recently the pace of nuclear disarmament has slowed down. At the same time the urgency of nuclear disarmament is increasing, as has been highlighted by the three conferences held on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

The painful memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from 70 years ago reminds us all of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that nuclear weapons use has. The Humanitarian Initiative reflects the genuine concern of citizens all over the world that as long as nuclear weapons exist there is a real threat of a terrible catastrophe, with immeasurable human and humanitarian costs. The humanitarian underpinning is a fundamental principle of the NPT, and therefore we believe that the discussion on humanitarian impacts will be a natural part of the NPT Review Conference and will contribute to its proceedings.

I am convinced that security cannot be based on weapons of mass destruction. Finland is committed to a world free of nuclear weapons. Working towards a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the responsibility of all nations.

For concrete nuclear disarmament, we need the substantive and constructive engagement of those States that possess nuclear weapons, as provided for in article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. To achieve progress, we need further transparency and confidence-building among all States, and therefore I see value in my Dutch colleague's proposal of a mandatory regular reporting requirement in the NPT review cycle.

Nuclear weapon proliferation poses a serious threat to international peace. All States should respect their commitments under the NPT by adopting and implementing a comprehensive safeguards agreement as proposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, together with an additional protocol. We continue our efforts to strengthen the Agency's safeguards system and to promote its universalization.

The conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction was planned to be held before the end of 2012. This schedule turned out to be too ambitious, as it was not possible to convene the conference with the participation of all States concerned. Nevertheless, participating States have continued preparations and have taken part in the process constructively through informal consultations.

The Finnish facilitator and the conveners — the United Nations Secretary-General, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — have communicated to all States of the region their assessment that significant progress has been made, the remaining key issues can be resolved and the conference can be convened once the States of the region reach agreement on the arrangements for the conference. The facilitator and the conveners encourage the continuation of informal meetings as soon as possible with a view to making as much progress as possible before the NPT Review Conference. The Government of Finland is committed to hosting the conference at short notice once convened.

In times when our common security, cooperation and principles are being tested and challenged, we should continue to strengthen the commitments and norms that are vital for international security and mutual trust. We should focus on what unites us all. In this regard, we will support every effort to promote an action-oriented consensus outcome of the NPT Review Conference.

The stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament remains a serious concern, and it is my sincere hope that this historically productive and valuable body will once again begin its work and start negotiating disarmament treaties. There is a real risk of the Conference being sidelined and overtaken by developments. Those of us who value the Conference should prove that this forum can still produce. In fact, we believe we would benefit from a

modern negotiating forum that would bring us results, i.e. disarmament treaties — a negotiating forum that would be open and inclusive, respecting various views, while at the same time aiming for consensus-building. Therefore, it is important to review and update, where possible, the working methods of the Conference. The expansion of the membership of the Conference would equally enhance the legitimacy and inclusiveness of this body. In addition, recognizing the beneficial contribution of civil society and academia in today's world, we should enhance their participation in the proceedings of the Conference. In this respect, we welcome the idea of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum organized for next week.

I am encouraged by the ongoing work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). We are pleased to have been able to provide our expertise for the proceedings of the Group. We are hopeful that this work will lay the ground for future efforts on the FMCT and that negotiations for this treaty will commence soon. We are looking forward to studying the forthcoming proposal of France on a draft FMCT treaty.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is one of the key instruments of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. With the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 in mind, we should continue exploring constructive ways to strengthen the existing mechanisms of the Convention. With 173 States parties, the Convention has wide global reach. However, in order to make it fully universal, we still have work to do.

Countering biological threats through enhanced biosecurity is a vital element of the global non-proliferation agenda. Biological threats do not recognize national borders, and therefore international cooperation is essential. As the Ebola outbreak has shown us, promoting global health security should be an international priority. Cooperation and preparedness is at the core of combating infectious diseases effectively through strengthened biological and health capabilities. Through initiatives such as the Global Health Security Agenda, Finland is looking for means to advance global health and biosecurity through concrete actions. Finland will chair the Global Health Security Agenda Steering Group this year.

Finland also attaches great importance to combating nuclear terrorism and preventing the risk of nuclear or other radioactive material falling into the hands of terrorists. Finland will have the pleasure of hosting a plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in June. New partners are warmly welcome to join this initiative and participate in the meeting in Helsinki.

Finland joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2012. We have since then practically destroyed our stocks of anti-personnel mines, and our contribution to humanitarian mine action has increased to the level of €6 million annually. We are actively supporting mine action in countries like Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Somalia and South Sudan. Like other parties to the Treaty, we are fully committed to the decisions of the Maputo Review Conference, with the aim of ending the suffering caused by these weapons.

I would like to highlight one of the most concrete international disarmament efforts of recent years. After the horrendous chemical attacks in Ghouta, Damascus, in August 2013, we witnessed how the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the international community strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria and were determined to follow through with the dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

Finland, among others, provided support and expertise in various phases of the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. For Finland, this was a matter of

great importance, as we have for years provided strong support to the Chemical Weapons Convention and its full implementation.

Owing to the uniqueness of the chemical weapons mission, we have supported United Nations “lessons learned” workshops and our experts have participated in them, as they provide valuable information on, for example, how we can further strengthen the Secretary-General’s mechanism for investigation of the alleged use of chemical and biological weapons.

Our work will not be finished until the Syrian chemical weapons programme is completely and irreversibly eliminated. It is essential that prompt destruction of the remaining production facilities is carried out and the discrepancies in the declarations are clarified. The use of toxic chemicals constitutes a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Therefore we have also voiced grave concerns over the findings of the fact-finding mission organized by OPCW, which established the facts around allegations of the use of chlorine against the civilian population in Syria. Finland was one of the co-sponsors of the recent Security Council resolution which condemned any use of any toxic chemicals and supported continuation of the fact-finding mission.

This year 22 April marks the centenary of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons at Ieper in Belgium during the First World War. Events in Ghouta in 2013 showed us that we still need to stay vigilant 100 years later.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research has been instrumental in providing research and expertise for the disarmament community in our specific fields. We have always found its contribution beneficial. This year should be crucial in finding a durable structure for the Institute. All of our help is needed in this effort, and Finland for its part will continue supporting it.

To conclude, Mr. President, I wish you and the Conference a productive year.

The President: I thank Minister Tuomioja for his statement and also for his kind words addressed to the President and the Conference. Allow me now to suspend the meeting in order to escort Minister Tuomioja from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: This concludes the list of dignitaries addressing the Conference at the high-level segment. We will now resume the normal plenary meeting. As I mentioned before, I would like to devote the remaining part of this meeting to a discussion with a focus on the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space. We had some discussions on this issue during last year’s informal discussions, and I believe that our debate today would contribute to the continuation of an in-depth discussion and deliberation on this issue.

I have a number of speakers on my list, and so I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time at the Conference on Disarmament as the Chinese Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and to thank you and the other colleagues for the welcome you have extended to me here.

Over 20 years ago in this very chamber, I participated — as a young member of the Chinese delegation — in the final negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention and in the entire negotiating process for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I was a witness to those milestone achievements in the history of the Conference. Today, I am deeply honoured to return to the Council Chamber as the Chinese Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs and to join colleagues here in the collective pursuit of international disarmament and arms control. I am also aware of the great responsibility this entails.

Over the past few days, dignitaries from a number of countries have addressed the high-level segment of the Conference and provided enlightening and thought-provoking insights into the current international security situation and some key arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. I would also like to take this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on some of these issues.

Today's world is undergoing profound change and adjustments. Economic globalization and the rapid development of science and technology have transformed the different countries of the world into a single community with an increasingly shared destiny and interests, while at the same time creating new problems and challenges that have made the threats to global security more complex and multifaceted.

In the annals of human history, arms control and disarmament have always been an important means of maintaining international peace and stability. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and of the victory in the war against fascism. Upholding the post-war international security order is in the shared best interests of the overwhelming majority of States. The multilateral and bilateral treaties on arms control and disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, have served as cornerstones and pillars providing stability to the post-war international security order. In the current circumstances, we should adopt a more responsible approach to the effective fulfilment of the obligations under these treaties, safeguard the credibility and authority of the international arms control and non-proliferation system, and give full play to these treaties' important role in maintaining international peace and security.

I have had the privilege of working at the World Health Organization for more than five years. In the health sector, there is a maxim that "prevention is better than cure". I believe that applies as well to arms control and disarmament.

Human intelligence is boundless: scientific and technological advances have ushered human activity into both outer space and cyberspace. But there are two sides to every coin. While new technologies indeed offer humankind untold benefits and unlimited possibilities, their military application can potentially pose massive risks and threats to the security and the very survival of humanity. It is incumbent on those involved in arms control to shoulder the immense responsibility of mitigating and controlling these risks and threats. We must not go down the old road of arms build-ups followed by disarmament or of simultaneous proliferation and disarmament. Rather, we should devote our efforts to preventive diplomacy and focus on halting the emerging arms race in outer space and cyberspace.

The objective of arms control is to maintain security, and that objective can be reached only on the basis of a correct and reasonable concept of security. The President of China, Mr. Xi Jinping, recently highlighted the need for a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable new security concept, which will have an important role to play in guiding and furthering international arms control efforts.

Undiminished security is a fundamental principle underlying international arms control efforts. Each State has different national circumstances and a different security environment, so naturally their security concerns are also different. The legitimate security concerns of all countries, whether large or small, strong or weak, should be taken into account and respected; and their legitimate positions should be treated fairly and on an equal basis, inasmuch as universal security for all countries is the only form of real and sustainable security. No country should base its own security on the insecurity of others. We need to abandon double standards whereby States are only willing to push forward discussions on items that are of concern to them and refuse to discuss items that are of concern to others. Only in this way can the process of international arms control and

disarmament obtain broad support from the international community, and only in this way will it be possible to achieve universality, authority and sustainability.

The Conference has enjoyed moments of glory in the past, but the prolonged stalemate that has persisted for almost two decades raises serious concerns. The revitalization of the Conference is an urgent task for all delegations. China believes that the key to revitalizing the Conference lies in keeping pace with the changing times. In the light of the new situation, we should show creativity and explore new ways of breaking the deadlock. We have a few preliminary ideas about how this might be accomplished:

The first is to make the Conference more representative. Given the current global trends of multipolarization and the democratization of international relations, the lack of broad representation has become the Achilles' heel of the Conference and seriously undermines its authority. The Conference has been discussing the issue of enlarging its membership for many years now but has been unable to make any headway. Rather than engaging in endless discussions about which country or countries should be admitted, it would be better to take the bolder measure of opening up the Conference to all sovereign States and allowing any State that wishes to join to do so.

The second idea is to add new agenda items. One of the main reasons for the deadlock in the Conference is that States attach importance to very different agenda items, making it difficult to reach consensus on a programme of work. It might therefore not be a bad idea to introduce some new agenda items, while still continuing to push for the start of substantive work within the Conference on traditional agenda items such as nuclear disarmament. Information security and the prevention of an arms race in cyberspace might be some good candidates.

The third idea is that the negotiation of treaties should not necessarily be the Conference's only objective. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference has always viewed the negotiation of arms control treaties as the main objective of its work. Treaty negotiations are time-consuming and strenuous, and States generally take a cautious attitude towards such inflexible instruments. It might therefore be easier for the Conference to make progress in negotiating and concluding a code of conduct on key threats to international security or on issues of common concern to all States.

These are a few of the ideas that have come to my mind as I return to the Conference after a 20-year absence. I look forward to exploring these and other ideas with colleagues here in our common effort to revitalize the Conference, push ahead with international arms control and disarmament and make new contributions to the maintenance of world peace and security.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. On behalf of the Conference and my Government I would like to extend again our warm welcome to Ambassador Fu Cong and wish him success in this important posting.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Bokhari (Pakistan): We are pleased at this opportunity to hold focused discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). With the ever growing use of outer space by an increasing number of States, both for civilian and military purposes, the potential and the risk of its weaponization cannot be ruled out. There is an urgent need to address this issue in the Conference in order to prevent outer space from emerging as a new realm of conflict and an arms race.

The issue of PAROS has been on the Conference's agenda for over three decades now. In our view, the time is ripe for the commencement of negotiations on a legally binding treaty.

The draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, tabled jointly by the Russian Federation and China in 2008 and updated in 2014, provides a useful basis for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome the circulation of the revised treaty text by China and Russia last year, in document CD/1985, and consider it a substantive and concrete contribution for advancing the work of the Conference on this agenda item.

The dominance enjoyed by certain countries in outer space owing to their current technological prowess cannot last forever. Other countries are catching up fast. And this time the developing countries will neither carry the burden of non-proliferation, nor will they accept any discriminatory restrictions which hamper their peaceful pursuits in outer space. The only answer is equal responsibility.

Pakistan is party to all of the five core multilateral treaties governing the peaceful uses of outer space, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968 Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention, the 1975 Registration Convention and the 1979 Moon Agreement. We stand ready to explore additional treaties that would contribute to preventing the weaponization of outer space.

Pakistan is a member of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Committee has an important role in maximizing the benefits of space capabilities in the service of humanity, particularly in the fields of environment, health and disaster mitigation. Pakistan has developed a strategy for the effective application of space-based technologies for sustainable development through its Space Vision 2040 plan. Space-based solutions for planning and development projects are being developed and implemented in the areas of agriculture, water resources and disaster management and mitigation.

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 placement 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, in outer space. Moreover, the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and their integration into space assets have added another dangerous dimension to this issue. These concerns need to be addressed in a treaty on PAROS.

My delegation is keen to understand from those States that are opposed to the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament the reasons for their opposition and how negotiations on PAROS would negatively affect their security interests, and why the contentious issues like definitions and verification, among others, cannot be addressed during negotiations, as advocated by them on another issue. In any case, these States should acknowledge their responsibility in perpetuating the deadlock in the Conference by preventing the start of negotiations on an issue which does not undermine the security interests of any State.

We take note of the consensus report and recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities. We agree that such measures should be aimed at increasing the security, safety and sustainability of outer space. We particularly welcome the Group's recommendation to further develop international cooperation between spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all States.

We recognize the value of transparency and confidence-building measures as well as non-legally binding codes of conduct in promoting trust among States. However, these voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for legally binding treaty-based obligations. There are clear gaps in the international legal regime governing the use of outer space with security implications. These gaps must be plugged by concluding a treaty on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament.

The informal discussions on PAROS that were held last year in the Conference under the schedule of activities were of great value in understanding the different perspectives and issues related to PAROS. In our view, the arguments that we heard against the commencement of negotiations on PAROS in the Conference did not relate to the national security concerns of States. That reinforced our view that none of the contentious issues is insurmountable, or cannot be resolved during negotiations.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/31, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", was co-sponsored by Pakistan and adopted on 2 December 2014 with an overwhelming majority of 178 States in favour, no abstentions and only 2 against. It calls on the Conference on Disarmament to establish a working group under its agenda item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" as early as possible during its 2015 session.

The General Assembly also adopted another important and landmark resolution co-sponsored by Pakistan at its last session entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space". This resolution urges an early start of substantive work based on the updated draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects submitted by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome the laudable and pioneering move by the Russian Federation to announce the political commitment that it would not be the first to place weapons in outer space and appreciate similar announcements by other States.

To conclude, we sincerely hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to undertake substantive work on the issue of PAROS during the current session under a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that also allows for progress on nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances.

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

Mr. Lusinski (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The European Union member States have a long-standing position in favour of the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and peaceful uses of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Strengthening the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities is of common interest. It contributes to the development and security of States.

Today, the space environment faces significant challenges stemming from the proliferation of dangerous orbital debris which increases the likelihood of destructive collisions, the crowding of satellites, inter alia, in geostationary orbit, the growing saturation of the radio frequency spectrum, as well as the threat of deliberate disruption or destruction of satellites. These challenges call for the serious and timely involvement of States to ensure greater safety, security and sustainability in outer space.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of strategic stability. It will also allow those States to benefit from peaceful uses of outer space and many opportunities for development that this can provide.

We attach great importance to the development and implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures as a means of strengthening security and ensuring sustainability in the peaceful use of outer space. We are pleased to know that in its recommendation the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities endorsed efforts to pursue political commitments, such as a multilateral code of conduct to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space.

To further these efforts, the European Union is promoting and encouraging States to support initiatives to this end, such as the European Union proposal for an international code of conduct for outer space activities. Three rounds of broad, open-ended consultations have already been conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. At the third and final open-ended consultation, held in Luxembourg in May 2014, a strong desire was expressed by many participants to move the process from a consultative to a negotiating phase. Ahead of the meeting of the First Committee at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the European Union and its member States conducted broad and useful consultations to ascertain the views of the United Nations Member States on moving the process to a negotiating phase, and we are committed to working towards achieving this step in 2015.

We remain concerned at the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including those which are terrestrially based, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

European Union member States voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 69/31 regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We noted the submission by China and the Russian Federation in 2014 of an updated 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. We maintain reservations regarding this updated draft. A new legally binding instrument would need to be comprehensive, precise and verifiable.

We believe that initiatives aiming to prevent an arms race in outer space should contribute to fostering a climate of mutual trust and transparency between States. Regarding General Assembly resolution 69/32 on no first placement of weapons in outer space, we are concerned that it does not adequately respond to this objective.

The very idea of not being the first to place weapons in outer space is ambiguous, and may entice States to prepare to be the second or third. Moreover, this initiative does not address the difficult issue of defining what a weapon in outer space is, which could easily lead a State to mistakenly assess that another State has placed weapons in outer space.

We believe it is more useful to address behaviour in, and the use of, outer space in order to further discussions and initiatives on how to prevent space from becoming an arena for conflict while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the space environment. We encourage States to support initiatives to this end, such as the European Union proposal for an international code of conduct for outer space activities. We reaffirm that the code is not in competition with, and not a replacement for, other possible initiatives, including those of a legally binding nature.

The European Union, guided by concern about the long-term safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities, as well as an eagerness to implement the consensus recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts, will remain an active partner in these matters. We look forward to further discussions on how to implement the Group's recommendations. In this context, we are committed to contribute to the conclusion of the multilateral process on the international code of conduct for outer space activities.

The President: I thank the representative of Latvia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Ms. Saggese (United Kingdom): Space security encompasses a great many issues — the more traditional ones that we associate with the word security, but also those associated with socioeconomic stability.

Over the past 50 years, reliance on space has become a critical component in our modern-day lives. Severe disruption to the information received, transmitted or collected by satellites could pose a significant security and economic risk to all countries. Security and emergency services would find coordinating and communicating with deployed personnel or emergency response vehicles much more difficult. Our ability to monitor, warn of and react to threats as diverse as international humanitarian crises, natural disasters, severe weather events and even terrorist attacks would be seriously curtailed.

Technology and business have evolved and continue to evolve to take advantage of space. So space security is about security for our financial sectors that rely upon space assets to trade. It is about safe and reliable information for our transport industries; continuous and predictable energy supplies; meteorological information for our agriculture and maritime industries; and, finally, fast and efficient communications across vast distances without the barriers caused by impenetrable terrain.

Today, there are more than 60 States and entities operating over 1,000 satellites in outer space. The Earth's upper atmosphere is becoming increasingly congested and hard to manage. A growing dependence on satellite services means that we are all vulnerable to one degree or another to the increased risks of collisions and space debris. Critical national infrastructure of the majority, if not all, of the States represented here relies on satellite technologies and the additional benefits that they can provide.

It is in this broad context that we should consider the impact that an arms race in outer space would have on global stability and prosperity. The destabilizing effects caused by an arms race in outer space, whether it be through the stationing of weapons in orbit or through the development of ground-based weapons systems that are capable of reaching orbiting targets, are in none of our interests. Allowing space to become an arena of conflict will have a long-lasting and material impact on the stability, sustainability and accessibility of space for all users, not only governments and military but commercial and humanitarian enterprises too.

Prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since its creation in 1979. The Final Document of the first special session on disarmament says: "In order to prevent an arms race in outer space, further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies." Since this time, there have been recurring ad hoc committees on the topic of PAROS within the Conference on Disarmament between 1985 and 1994. The mandate for these ad hoc committees was to find and build upon areas of convergence, taking into account relevant proposals, initiatives and developments.

There are three current initiatives that are related to this agenda item: the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, the "No first placement" resolution and the international code of conduct for outer space activities. For our part, we see the first step for future progress on PAROS similar to many other arms control areas: one of transparency and confidence-building. Measures to improve transparency and increase confidence among States are an essential foundation to any future negotiation. We believe it is important to develop initiatives to ensure confidence and mutual trust between current and

future space actors, and we are convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities can make a contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. Therefore, we support the European Union proposal for an international code of conduct for outer space activities and encourage States to also support this initiative.

The United Kingdom was delighted to be able to coordinate the informal discussions on PAROS at the Conference on Disarmament last year. The range and depth of discussions, and the number of States who engaged, showed that this is a subject important to many countries. As well as debates on the initiatives currently tabled were other broader questions: What approach should we take to building a framework governing behaviour in space? Should we take a definitional approach and seek to ban specific technologies, or a behavioural approach and control specific actions? Are we too focused on weapons being stationed in space when certain countries are actively developing and testing ground-based weapons systems with the sole aim of destroying space assets?

Throughout the meetings held in June there was substantive discussion on many aspects of PAROS. Even though the discussion was not conclusive, should the discussions be repeated in the future, there are a number of topics to which the Conference could usefully contribute, and the United Kingdom remains available to carry these forward.

The discussions across the space community, be it in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in a joint session of the First and Fourth Committees, in meetings on the international code of conduct or here in the Conference on Disarmament, demonstrate that space security is a cross-cutting issue that must be considered in its entirety, not separately in its component parts, in order for any action to preserve the outer space environment to be effective. It is therefore clear that the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space is one that has long been shared, and it is only by all space actors in all parts of that system working together that progress will be made.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom. The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Russian Federation. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Malov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As you are all well aware, the international community's interest in ensuring the safety of outer space activities is growing. At the same time, something else is also clear, in our view. It is not realistic to speak of the safety and long-term sustainability of outer space activities in the absence of safeguards banning the placement of weapons in outer space. This is confirmed by the adoption every year — by an overwhelming majority — of a General Assembly resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is submitted alternately by Egypt and Sri Lanka. In fact, no one votes against the resolution; it is adopted essentially by consensus. We see this as evidence of the exceptional relevance of the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and, no less significantly, of the international community's recognition of the need to find a solution as soon as possible.

Those who vote in favour of the resolution understand clearly that the placement of weapons in outer space would radically alter the international environment. Strategic stability would be threatened inasmuch as space-based weapons could hit targets anywhere on Earth and could be used covertly or without advance warning anywhere and at any time. We stress that the selectivity of space weapons would actually lead to their greater use. In our opinion, the risk of such a scenario materializing becomes ever more credible as science and technology advance. Furthermore, outer space remains legally undefended against the possible placement of weapons. As you know, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which includes a ban on the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, does not cover other types of weapon, including conventional weapons. We believe that it is essential to fill a gap that has long existed in international law.

With this aim in mind, Russia, China and like-minded countries have worked steadily to develop a legally binding international instrument on PAROS, a task of critical importance in ensuring equal and indivisible security for all and for maintaining global stability. In 2008, Russia and China presented to the Conference for its consideration 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 updated draft, which Russia and China presented at the Conference last year, is a pragmatic text and takes account of the reality of the current situation and the present political and strategic thinking of the spacefaring States. In it, we tried to take account of constructive proposals made by States.

We are aware that the updated draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space has been the subject of criticism. In this connection, we would like to note that it would be difficult to find a single international treaty currently in operation that fully satisfied all demands. For instance, verification mechanisms are often imperfect and, sometimes, as in the Biological Weapons Convention, they are absent altogether. However, no one would think to doubt the effectiveness of that Convention.

In scope, the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space was not conceived as a comprehensive convention aimed at preventing all activities connected with the creation of space weaponry. The Treaty has an extremely specific task: to ban the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. For this reason, it does not cover the research, development, production and terrestrial storage of space-based weapons and the terrestrial testing of such weapons. Nor does the draft Treaty include a ban on ground-based anti-satellite equipment.

Furthermore, solutions to the problem of so-called anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons are provided for by means of the strict implementation of article 2 (2) of the draft Treaty, which establishes an obligation not to resort to the threat or use of force against outer space objects of States parties to the Treaty. We see the absence of regulations governing ASAT weapons in the draft Treaty as an advantage rather than a failing. It is intentional, so as to ensure that States parties have the means to fight back in exercise of their inalienable right to self-defence in the case of the use of space attack systems by non-parties or by violators of the Treaty. In fact, potential aggressors will be deterred by the inevitability of a response.

Regarding the definitions of the use of force and the threat of force, we specified their content with reference only to outer space. The definitions were deliberately limited to intentional actions aimed at inflicting damage in outer space.

We continue to believe that the problem of a verification mechanism can be resolved during full-scale negotiations of the draft text at the Conference, in particular by the development of an additional verification protocol. We are counting on practical contributions from other States, especially those that take a heightened interest in issues of verification. As to the argument that it would be impossible to monitor compliance with any agreements banning space-based weapons, it should be noted that the approach to the feasibility of verification has evolved. We refer to the paper submitted by Canada (document CD/1785), which indicates a wide range of concepts and methods for improving capabilities for monitoring the space environment.

In general, our position is that, until a verification mechanism has been developed, its absence could be partly compensated by the implementation of agreed transparency and confidence-building measures. The aim of the draft Treaty is to keep outer space free from weapons. It is precisely the international community's unity in recognizing the need to achieve this aim, as clearly expressed in the General Assembly resolutions on PAROS, that forms the basis for our substantive work together on such a treaty. At the same time, we are aware that the updated draft is not a finished product but an invitation to work together to further improve the text. It is important to take advantage of a favourable situation — the

current absence of weapons in outer space — and to undertake substantive work to that end without delay.

In the meantime, until the conclusion of a treaty and its entry into force, we consider it important to work for the globalization of the initiative to prevent the first placement of weapons in outer space. The initiative is a voluntary political commitment by which a State affirms that its outer space activities are for peaceful use. Since the initiative is in essence a confidence-building measure, it would be inappropriate to impose requirements analogous to those stipulated in international treaties, particularly with regard to the verifiability of its implementation. The recognition that the initiative is an important and pertinent component of the prevention of an arms race in outer space led to strong support for the corresponding draft resolution considered at the latest session of the General Assembly. As you are aware, it was co-sponsored by 34 countries, and in total 126 States voted in favour of the resolution. We are counting on the fact that, at the seventieth anniversary session of the General Assembly, support for the resolution will be even broader.

The progress made in the international arena in developing transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space activities is another important front in our efforts to meet the challenges of preventing an arms race in outer space. On a practical level, the outcomes of the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on this subject go far beyond the elements included in its report. It contains a synthesis of the approaches of various States for ensuring the safety of outer space activities. The Group's report, which includes specific transparency and confidence-building measures, is not a finished product but, rather, forms the basis for future work on the topic. We are prepared to continue this work on the basis of the General Assembly resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures, adopted by consensus with the unprecedented co-sponsorship of Russia, China and the United States of America.

For us, developing transparency and confidence-building measures and introducing them into international practice is of major and, I would say, practical significance, since we consider that such measures can be used as elements of the verification mechanism of the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space. The planned joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly will be an important step in the development of outer space initiatives. We assume that the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space will receive due attention at that meeting.

We are also prepared to work on other initiatives to solve the problems associated with ensuring safety in outer space activities. For six years, Russia has been an active and constructive participant in discussions of the international code of conduct for outer space activities proposed by the European Union. We hold that further progress in the development of a document acceptable to the international community can be made only if the comments and suggestions of all participants are taken into account, and also in the course of full-scale negotiations with the participation of all interested States, based on a clearly formulated mandate under the aegis of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am pleased to have this opportunity to reiterate the views of the United States on space security under the rubric of the Conference's agenda item on preventing an arms race in outer space.

Space systems contribute to global economic prosperity, advance scientific knowledge, help mitigate the effects of and manage responses to disasters, contribute to transparency and stability among nations and provide a vital communications path for avoiding potential conflicts. But the legacy of success in space also brings new challenges.

Outer space is becoming increasingly congested from orbital debris and contested from human threats that endanger the space environment. Therefore, it is essential that all nations work together to preserve this domain for use by future generations.

The United States is especially concerned about the continued development and testing of destructive anti-satellite systems. Although some States have advocated space arms control measures to prohibit the placement of weapons in outer space, their own development of terrestrially based destructive anti-satellite capabilities is destabilizing, could trigger dangerous misinterpretations and miscalculations, and could be escalatory in a crisis or conflict. The world has seen long-lasting environmental effects of the intentionally destructive 2007 direct-ascent anti-satellite missile flight test by China that generated long-lived debris in low Earth orbit. Moreover, the 23 July 2014 non-destructive flight test by China of an anti-satellite missile interceptor designed to destroy satellites in low Earth orbit was also troubling.

And China is not the only one pursuing these capabilities. As Director of National Intelligence James Clapper noted in his February 2015 congressional testimony, "Russian leaders openly assert that the Russian armed forces have anti-satellite weapons and conduct anti-satellite research."

The United States has long indicated its willingness to consider space arms control proposals and concepts that are equitable, effectively verifiable and enhance the security of all nations. However, the revised draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects submitted by Russia and China to the Conference on Disarmament last year does not satisfy these criteria. As the United States noted in our analysis submitted to the Conference, which was published as document CD/1998, the draft Treaty, like the earlier 2008 version, remains flawed for numerous reasons, including its lack of verifiability, its failure to address terrestrially based anti-satellite systems and the potential for a break-out capability.

Russia and China openly acknowledge that technologies do not currently exist to verify compliance with such a ban. Furthermore, the updated draft Treaty distracts attention from the most pressing threat to outer space objects: terrestrially based anti-satellite systems. Under the draft Treaty, there is no prohibition on the research, development, testing, production, storage or deployment of terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons. Thus, the draft Treaty evades the fact that terrestrially based capabilities could be used to perform the same functions as space-based weapons. For example, according to our analysis, the 11 January 2007 flight test by China of a ground-based direct-ascent anti-satellite missile against its own weather satellite would have been permitted under both the 2008 and the updated 2014 drafts. The subsequent non-destructive test of this same system by China on 23 July 2014 would also have been allowed.

In contrast to the flawed approach offered by the draft Treaty, there are numerous pragmatic ways in which spacefaring nations could cooperate to preserve the security and sustainability of the space domain. Indeed, the United States is convinced that there are challenges that can and should be addressed through practical, near-term initiatives, such as non-legally binding transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, outer space.

One such way forward was demonstrated by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts in its study of outer space TCBMs. The Group's report endorsed voluntary, non-legally binding TCBMs. Achieving consensus in July 2013, the report's recommendations were endorsed by the full General Assembly in resolutions 68/50 and 69/38, which the United States co-sponsored with the other participants in the Group, including Russia and China.

In this regard, the United States welcomes the decision by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to consider the Group's report during its fifty-eighth session in June 2015. This session in Vienna can serve as an opportunity for exchanges on the role of pragmatic, voluntary guidelines to enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. These sustainability guidelines will have characteristics similar to those of TCBMs; some of them could be considered as potential TCBMs, while others could provide the technical basis for the implementation of certain transparency and confidence-building measures proposed in the Group's report.

Reflecting the importance we place on the Group's report, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor General Assembly resolution 69/38 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, which calls for further consideration of the Group's recommendations at a joint ad hoc meeting of the General Assembly's First and Fourth Committees during the upcoming seventieth session.

The Group's report also made a very important contribution by establishing criteria for evaluating the validity of TCBMs for outer space activities. In applying these criteria, the United States notes that some TCBM proposals fail to satisfy the Group's criteria. For example, in assessing the Russian initiative for States to make declarations of "No first placement" of weapons in outer space, we conclude that this initiative has three basic flaws. First, the "No first placement" pledge does not adequately define what constitutes a weapon in outer space. Second, other parties would not be able to confirm effectively a State's political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. Third, the pledge focuses exclusively on space-based weapons, such as the co-orbital anti-satellite weapon once flight-tested and deployed by the former Soviet Union. It is silent with regard to terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons, which, as previously noted, constitute a significant threat to spacecraft.

Fortunately, constructive, pragmatic and effective proposals for space TCBMs do exist that satisfy the Group's criteria. For example, the United States has actively participated over the past two years in deliberations on an international code of conduct for outer space activities. The United States looks forward to working with the European Union and the broader international community in an inclusive multilateral process to finalize a code.

If we are serious about maintaining the space environment for future generations, we must develop and implement pragmatic and effective measures on a timely basis that remedy concrete problems and reject those initiatives that are problematic, ineffective or irrelevant to protecting the security and sustainability of the space environment.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belarus. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Grinevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus considers the prevention of an arms race in outer space to be one of the foremost priorities of international security, arms control and disarmament. We support strict compliance with and the further development of the existing international legal instruments regulating the activities of States in the sphere of space law. We consider it important to develop the system of international measures strengthening transparency, building confidence and improving safety in outer space, but, at the same time, it is our view that such measures will not help to close the gaps and lacunas in current space law. In this connection, we support specific proposals aimed at preserving peace in outer space and, of course, proposals aimed at developing international legal agreements addressing the prevention and banning of the weaponization of outer space.

In our view, the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects presented at the Conference on Disarmament by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China

provides the most appropriate basis for such an effort. We believe that this text (document CD/1985), presented on 12 June 2014, forms a firm basis on which to commence negotiations of the topic at the Conference. We hold that the adoption of such a treaty would contribute significantly to efforts to fill specific gaps and settle unresolved issues in the existing agreements in the field of space law.

Allow me now to dwell on some other nuances. We are somewhat perplexed that certain members of the Group of Western European and Other States avoid entering into specific discussions of the issues at hand. Both at the present session of the Conference and at previous ones, many States in that Group have often preferred to talk about the problems or, rather, nuances related to the topic of the peaceful uses of outer space. If we extrapolate to another area, it would not be entirely in order for the many States that do not support or have a different attitude towards the solution of problems relating to fissile material to speak about the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, nuclear summits and so forth. Discussions of the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) are very often "tainted" with space debris. Speaking in a national capacity, we note that the discussion of the prevention of an arms race in outer space at sessions of the Conference was more focused during the previous decade.

Regarding the arguments contained in the text submitted by the United States of America (document CD/1998) as an analysis of the Russian and Chinese draft, we would like to note the following: we are not certain that the arguments in favour of a system of verification for the treaty are justified. As I have already said, a detailed discussion of verification as part of such a treaty was conducted over the previous decade, for instance, under the leadership of Paul Meyer, the Canadian Ambassador. The delegations generally came to agree that all-encompassing systems of verification for monitoring the observance by all States of the provisions of the treaty would be possible only with the deployment of verification satellites, which would be extremely expensive.

In preparation for the present meeting, I consulted publicly available data from which it emerged that the cost of launching a single rocket with a space-based system varies between \$35 million and \$100 million. This is the cost for only one launch. You must all be aware that, with one satellite in near-Earth orbit, it would be difficult to verify the implementation of a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Several would clearly be required. The construction of terrestrial verification infrastructure would entail additional expenses for a space flight centre, the development of the verification satellites themselves and the maintenance of an international verification organization.

I would like to quote another figure. As you know, the annual budget of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was €73.3 million in 2014. The regular budget of the United Nations for 2014 and 2015 was \$5.53 billion. If we decide to create a fully fledged international organization to monitor the implementation of a (comprehensive and exhaustive) verifiable treaty, yet another organization will come into being with a budget comparable to that of the United Nations; and many developing countries, particularly small ones, will find it difficult to afford the large annual contributions required to finance its operation.

In this connection, we consider the realistic decision of the Russian Federation and China to leave open the question of verification in the draft Treaty to be justified. We note that there are other cases in which the very existence of a legal agreement stipulating rules of behaviour is sufficient. The Antarctic Treaty is a good example of such an agreement. It stipulates clearly that States parties must neither conduct military activity nor place weapons on the continent.

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

Ms. Robles (France) (*spoke in French*): The French delegation fully endorses the statement just made on behalf of the European Union. France is of the view that the issue of space security concerns both outer space objects and activities in outer space. Space security requires a comprehensive response that covers both civilian and military aspects. It is in our common interest, as current and future spacefaring nations, to promote the principle of the responsible use of space in our civilian as well as military space programmes.

France is committed to preserving the security of activities in outer space and to carrying out those activities for peaceful purposes. This must be done in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. In this spirit, it is in our interest to further reflect collectively on how best to strengthen the security of activities in outer space and to create a climate of mutual trust.

As has been stated on many previous occasions, France shares the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. France is not opposed in principle to drafting instruments and developing initiatives aimed at achieving that goal within the Conference on Disarmament as part of an agreed and structured programme of work.

We take note of the efforts by Russia and China to promote discussions within the Conference on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Allow me to reiterate, however, the position of France regarding the conditions necessary for drafting a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We all hope that an instrument of this type will truly provide increased safety. For that to happen, such an instrument should be comprehensive, accurate, universal and credible. These conditions cannot be taken for granted, however. I am thinking, for example, about the difficulty of defining certain basic terms, the need to formulate specific prohibitions and the complexity of establishing a credible verification mechanism. The development of such a treaty is necessarily a long-term project.

The rapid deterioration of the outer space environment requires an urgent and pragmatic response based on measures that can be implemented immediately. Thus, we support the promotion of responsible practices and the development of voluntary confidence-building and transparency measures in the immediate future. The work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities has helped to identify such measures through collective and consensual efforts, whether they be of a political or technical nature. France will consider the merits of any proposal with respect to how effective it will be in building confidence and transparency in outer space.

We wonder about the ambiguity of the concept of “no first placement of weapons in outer space” and its implications for security in outer space. Apart from the difficulties related to defining the term “weapon in outer space” — which I have already explained — we also wonder whether such a measure might be seen as legitimizing a priori any subsequent use of weapons in outer space after the first use. On the other hand, we believe that such a commitment would not prevent signatory States from developing anti-satellite capabilities, which could be used to respond rapidly to the use by another State of what might be considered to be a weapon in outer space.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our full support for the draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The work being done on the draft Code of Conduct seems to us to respond fully to the objective of strengthening security in outer space. The project will build confidence among stakeholders in the use of space. It will reduce the risk of malicious acts going unnoticed or of incidents in outer space being interpreted as expressions of hostile intent.

This political initiative constitutes a practical step towards strengthening security in outer space. France supports the current discussions aimed at finalizing the Code, which we hope will be adopted this year. We will work towards this, and we call on all States interested in the initiative to remain committed to negotiating this instrument, so as to further our common goal of responding in a timely and pragmatic manner to regulate activities in outer space.

The President: I thank the representative of France for her statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Italy. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. We agree that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of peace and stability. This is the reason why we are fully committed to actively participate in these discussions and in promoting international cooperation in order to ensure the security, safety and long-term sustainability of activities in outer space and to foster the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Therefore, we welcomed the report that the Group of Governmental Experts adopted in 2013 and the United Nations General Assembly approved by consensus. The world's growing dependence on outer space capabilities makes it necessary for States and the international community to undertake constructive joint efforts with a view to advancing the consideration of factors affecting outer space stability and security. Italy acknowledges that the existing treaties on outer space already contain several transparency and confidence-building measures of a mandatory nature. However, we also think that non-legally binding measures for outer space activities can usefully complement the existing international legal framework pertaining to space activities, without undermining existing legal obligations or hampering the lawful use of outer space, particularly by emerging space actors.

In this context, we support the implementation of recommendations contained in the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts, in particular those concerning efforts to fulfil political commitments, for example in the form of a multilateral code of conduct to encourage responsible actions in and the peaceful use of outer space. In this vein, we strongly support the ongoing efforts of the European Union to promote the proposal for an international code of conduct for outer space activities as a joint response to the request of the General Assembly in resolution 62/43 for concrete proposals in this field. We support the comprehensive scope of the draft code, which is applicable to military as well as civil operations in outer space. The purpose of the new draft code is not to compete with or replace other possible initiatives. On the contrary, the project complements and contributes to those initiatives by emphasizing the importance of taking all measures in order to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict and calling upon all nations to resolve any conflict in outer space by peaceful means.

Some countries have expressed concern that such voluntary instruments are inherently fragile and are unlikely to prove effective in preventing an arms race in outer space. We believe that voluntary frameworks do not necessarily retard the establishment of binding norms and can in fact pave the way for the adoption of such measures once their effectiveness can be proved and their practicability demonstrated.

With this in view, we will support further efforts to promote the international code of conduct in order to bring this process from a consultative to a negotiating phase. We are committed to work towards achieving this step in 2015. We look forward to deeper discussion during the second part of the Conference, which will be devoted, we hope, to a structured dialogue on the four core items of the agenda.

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

Mr. Fu Cong (China): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor again. Before I read my prepared text, I would like to say a few words in response to what the Ambassador of the United States said concerning the list of the Chinese tests he had mentioned.

I just want to make two brief points. One is that it is incorrect to categorize those Chinese technical tests as anti-satellite weapon systems tests. As a matter of fact, as has been repeatedly said on several occasions, some of the tests were actually anti-missile tests and some were in fact for the exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The second point I want to make is that some of the tests the Chinese side has conducted are not dissimilar to what the United States side has conducted. I just want to register those two points.

(spoke in Chinese)

Mr. President, the prevention of an arms race in outer space is a priority for China in the field of international security and arms control and in the Conference on Disarmament. As I pointed out in my previous statement, we need to work on preventive diplomacy in order to maximize our efforts to thwart an arms race in outer space. For more than 30 consecutive years, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted by an overwhelming majority resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in which it has called on the Conference to negotiate and conclude a legal instrument on the subject. This is fully in line with the international community's opposition to the weaponization of outer space and the consensus on the need to prevent an arms race in outer space. In June 2014, China and the Russian Federation jointly submitted to the Conference an updated draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, which is contained in document CD/1985. The aim of this new draft is to push forward efforts in the Conference to negotiate and conclude an international, legally binding instrument on the subject. We would like to thank the many delegations that have expressed their support for our updated draft, and we also welcome the feedback and suggestions we have received from some countries. My delegation has already explained its principled position on this subject during the recent discussions on outer space that were held under the Mexican presidency. What I would like to do today is to focus on a few specific issues related to the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space.

The first issue is the verification of implementation. Verification of the implementation of the draft Treaty will have political, technical and financial implications. At this stage, it would be very difficult to come up with a verification regime that is both practical and cost-effective. However, in response to the concerns raised by some countries regarding verification, our updated text allows for the possibility of concluding an additional protocol on verifying compliance with the treaty. At the same time, the updated version also provides that any country may voluntarily implement agreed transparency and confidence-building measures, thereby providing technical and institutional support to a certain extent for the design and implementation of future verification measures. We believe that what matters most now is to have a legally binding consensus on the need to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against space objects. In order to achieve this consensus in a timely fashion, it would perhaps be advisable to set aside certain contentious issues for the time being, such as the issue of verification. As technology progresses, once conditions are ripe we can consider the adoption of a verification protocol. Moreover, we can also approach the question of verification from a different angle. Some major international arms control treaties that do

not have verification regimes, such as the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, are nevertheless able to play an effective role. Therefore, while a new treaty with a stringent verification mechanism would be ideal, this is certainly not a requirement for the conclusion of a treaty.

The second issue is the scope of the treaty. While the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space does not explicitly prohibit the possession, testing, production or stockpiling of outer space weapons, it does explicitly prohibit the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. By banning both placement and use, the treaty in fact draws a line in the sand for spacefaring nations. Under such circumstances, possessing, testing, producing and stockpiling outer space weapons becomes meaningless. The reason that the draft Treaty does not explicitly prohibit development and testing is because outer space technology often is of dual use and because no effective verification measures are available. Therefore, a prohibition on development and testing could adversely affect the right of all countries to peacefully use outer space. In conclusion, the absence of provisions in the treaty prohibiting the possession, testing, production and stockpiling of outer space weapons should not undermine its effectiveness.

The third issue is that of anti-satellite weapons. The core purpose of the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space is to prohibit the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against space objects. If the development and testing of anti-satellite weapons in and of itself results in the placement of weapons in outer space or the threat or use of force against outer space objects as defined in the draft Treaty, then such acts are prohibited under the draft Treaty. Therefore, we cannot draw the sweeping conclusion that the draft Treaty does not prohibit the development or testing of anti-satellite weapons, including land-based anti-satellite systems. Essentially, the draft Treaty will completely prohibit the use of force against space objects, and that prohibition will naturally cover anti-satellite weapons. This means that, even if a State party possesses such weapons, it will not be able to use them. This will also serve to reduce State parties' capabilities and intentions to develop and test such weapons. The purpose of the draft Treaty is to establish a principled consensus among all countries to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and to not use or threaten to use force in outer space. If all countries have sufficient political will and can establish such a consensus in a legally binding form, then potential threats like the testing of anti-satellite weapons will be easily dealt with.

Mr. President, my delegation wanted to make these few points by way of clarification and explanation in response to the comments and suggestions received on the updated draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space. The updated draft submitted by China and the Russian Federation is an open document, and we will continue to listen to input from all delegations, including the question just raised by the Ambassador of the United States of America. We will continuously strive to improve the draft, so that it can become the basis for substantive negotiations in the Conference.

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

Mr. Varma (India): We, of course, welcome this opportunity to discuss the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space. India joined as co-sponsor of United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/31 on prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also joined the authors of the Group of 21 working paper (document CD/1941) submitted to the Conference in 2013.

Over the past five decades, India has emerged as a major spacefaring nation. Our space programme has developmental and security dimensions. We have a well-established and highly successful space launch vehicle programme and international cooperation with a large number of countries. India has sent a spacecraft to the Moon, and the Mars Orbiter Mission has already completed five months in the orbit of Mars.

We believe that outer space should not become an arena of conflict but should be a new and expanding frontier of cooperative activity. This places a responsibility on all spacefaring nations to contribute to international efforts to safeguard outer space as the common heritage of humankind and to preserve and promote the benefits flowing from advances in space technology and its applications for all. We are against the weaponization of outer space and support international efforts to reinforce the safety and security of space-based assets.

India is a party to all the major international treaties relating to outer space. We believe that this international legal framework needs to be strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

India is prepared to give consideration to the revised 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 presented by Russia and China as a contribution to the various proposals for negotiating a legally binding instrument in the Conference on Disarmament.

We have taken note of the clarifications provided by both the Russian and the Chinese delegations today on certain questions that have been raised by other delegations, especially on some of the gaps that persist in the revised draft Treaty.

While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in this field. India has participated in discussions being led by the European Union on a draft international code of conduct for outer space activities.

India supported General Assembly resolution 69/32 on no first placement of weapons in outer space. However, we see this as only an interim step and not a substitute for concluding comprehensive substantive legal measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which should continue to be a priority for the international community.

Though India supported resolution 69/38 on transparency and confidence-building measures, it is unfortunate that a major spacefaring country like India was not included in the Group of Governmental Experts on the topic. In our view a more representative Group could have enhanced the content of that report.

India supports the substantive consideration of the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament, where it has been on the agenda since 1982, including, inter alia, negotiations in a subsidiary body as part of a programme of work.

Before concluding, I would like to extend a warm word of welcome to the new Chinese Ambassador. We look forward to working with him as he takes forward and joins the responsibilities of his country in this Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Wardhani (Indonesia): My delegation appreciates your efforts, Mr. President, in organizing the substantive discussions on core issues of the Conference on Disarmament.

In discussing the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the Conference should focus on finding ways to avert an arms race in outer space. Resolution 69/32, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space” and adopted by the General Assembly on 11 December 2014, reiterates that the Conference has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

Indonesia found the deliberations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at last year’s informal plenary meetings under the coordination of Ambassador Matthew Rowland of the United Kingdom very constructive and timely. The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency in the light of legitimate concern that the existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

Indonesia shares the view that the placement of weapons in outer space could contribute to global instability. For this reason, a joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the Russian Federation was signed in Brunei Darussalam on 1 July 2013 declaring that both countries will not in any way be the first to place weapons of any kind in outer space. This joint statement was circulated as an official document of the Conference (document CD/1954).

As far as the international legal instrument is concerned, Indonesia welcomes the joint Russian-Chinese initiative as contained in document CD/1985 on 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, which we believe deserves further consideration and could serve as a basis for the Conference to negotiate international legal instruments in the area of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities also carried out an in-depth study on this issue and has achieved a positive outcome.

My delegation would like to recall that Indonesia, together with China, Russia, Belarus, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Syria presented working paper CD/1679 dated 28 June 2002 which outlined possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against objects in outer space. My delegation believes that this working paper still has its relevance to the item under discussion.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underline that all States have a responsibility to refrain from engaging in any activity which could jeopardize the collective goal of maintaining outer space free of weapons. We firmly believe that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies should have solely peaceful objectives and be of benefit to all States.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for her statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

This concludes our business for this afternoon. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m., when we will have a discussion with a focus on the issue of negative security assurances. In addition, a representative of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom will address the Conference to commemorate International Women’s Day.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.