

**STATEMENT BY MR. MAITREY KULKARNI, DIRECTOR(D&ISA),  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, ON 'NORMS, RULES AND  
PRINCIPLES RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
INCLUDING WITH RESPECT TO SPACE SURVEILLANCE AND SPACE  
SITUATIONAL AWARENESS' AT THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP  
ON SPACE THREATS, GENEVA, FEBRUARY 3, 2023**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I take the floor to express my delegations' perspective on this session's topic on 'norms, rules and principles relating to international cooperation including with respect to space surveillance and space situational awareness'.

First of all, let me reiterate that India strongly advocates peaceful uses of outer space and recognizes that space is a global common to be utilized for the benefits of all humankind. India is opposed to weaponization of the outer space and has not resorted to any arms race in outer space.

India has been an active proponent of international cooperation in the domain of outer space, with a space program firmly rooted in peaceful applications, aimed at extending the benefits of space-based services for enrichment of life of the common man.

In this regard, India recognizes that Space Situational Awareness (SSA) is an integral part of safe and sustainable operations in outer space. Efforts are underway to set up space object observational facilities in India comprising of radars and optical telescopes. A dedicated ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Space Operations Management (IS<sup>4</sup>OM) has been established to collate all SSA efforts in India and to act as a hub for the relevant data exchanges and collaborations. This is with the objective of ensuring that Indian outer space activities are conducted in a safe, sustainable and responsible manner.

With the project on NEtwork for space object TRacking and Analysis (NETRA), India has channelized its efforts in Space Situational Awareness and also joined the international efforts towards tracking, warning and mitigating space debris. The observational and computational capabilities for space objects tracking and management are being enhanced under the scope of project NETRA.

India has been making efforts for raising awareness on SSA matters. An international workshop on Space Situational Awareness and Space Traffic Management was organized by India in January 2023, which focused on the challenges posed by space debris and deliberated on the methods, procedures, technologies and policies for preserving the security and safety of outer space.

Mr. Chair,

In the context of space situational awareness and space surveillance, India encourages collaboration and information exchange amongst the member

states in cognizance of the fact that cooperation and transparency is key to ensure safe and sustainable operations in space.

With regard to discussions on norms, rules and principles for reducing space threats, permit me to briefly reiterate our views.

Mr. Chair,

Subjectivity in the interpretation of space behaviors and perception of threats, how they are understood and the applications of such determinations has been a matter of concern to us.

Let me refer to the report of the GGE on TCBMs in 2013, which in its para 34 defines the criteria for a transparency and confidence building measure. It states that any proposed TCBMs must be clear, practical and proven, and they should be effectively confirmed by other parties in its application.

In this regard, we have concerns about 'who' and on 'what basis' will the assessments be made on the responsibility of space operations and lack thereof. We have concerns about the verification of space behavior using current technology and the access to such technology.

The means for an unbiased assessment of a space behavior that are accepted and understood by all uniformly, and that are immune to politicization are a related matter of concern.

We feel that the essence of testing a TCBM for its implementation and validation, as provided in para 35 of the report of the GGE on TCBMs in 2013 must be preserved/ retained in consideration of any new norms, rules and principles.

In the context of challenges associated with verification, we suggest that there could be some merit in further exploring the feasibility of developing a global or intergovernmental basis for independent SSA capabilities.

Let me conclude by saying that India attaches importance to safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities and is committed to playing a responsible role in the international efforts towards preserving benefits of outer space for the future generations.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.