

STATEMENT BY MR. MADHAV NAKANI, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE, ON NORMS, RULES AND PRINCIPLES RELATING TO INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND RISK REDUCTION NOTIFICATIONS RELATED TO OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS TO CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS AT THE OPEN ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SPACE THREATS, GENEVA, 2 FEBRUARY 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 information exchange and risk reduction notifications related to outer space activities'.

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 is party to all the major international treaties and regulations related to outer space, including Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention.

Mr. Chair,

India voluntarily implements UN and IADC recommended guidelines for space debris mitigation to the maximum extent possible and practicable while undertaking continual efforts to improve the level of compliance with these guidelines. The implemented measures include passivation of upper stages, Launch Collision Avoidance (COLA) assessments, Space Object Proximity Analyses (SOPA) for operational satellites, post mission disposal of GEO satellites to super-synchronous graveyard orbits, and end-of-life de-orbiting of LEO satellites/rocket stages to minimize their post mission lifetime.

With regard to the recommendations suggested in the GGE report on TCBMs in 2013, India exchanges information on the orbital elements of space objects and provides information of potential orbital conjunctions. India provides registration information to the UN and shares information on spaceflight activity. India also shares pre-launch notifications of space launch vehicles.

India also provides risk reduction notifications including notifications on scheduled maneuvers that may result in risk to flight safety of other space objects, as well as notifications and monitoring of uncontrolled high risk re-entry events.

Mr. Chair,

As evident, our work in this body must take into account the previous work and discussions that have taken place on enhancing outer space safety, security and sustainability in different fora.

Rather than prioritizing the creation of a new set of norms, there should be focus on fully implementing the ones that already exist.

As demonstrated by India's responsible operations, we encourage states to fully implement the recommendations as contained in the 21 LTS Guidelines agreed by UN COPUOS, debris mitigation guidelines endorsed by IADC, as well as TCBMs outlined in GGE report in 2013.

India has been engaging actively in the working group on Long Term Sustainability in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the UN COPUOS. We have contributed to identifying and studying challenges to long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and shared our experiences and lessons learned from voluntary implementation of the adopted guidelines.

India recognizes the importance of technical collaboration to deal with global nature of space debris problem. We encourage relevant data sharing and exchange amongst international space agencies and entities for effective monitoring, prevention and mitigation of space debris. We note that such discussions are taking place under the UN COPUOS, which we believe is the appropriate forum for discussing the same.

While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in preventing arms race in outer space.

In addition, we believe that our discussions should take into account the differing mandates, and try to avoid the overlaps. This would be necessary to avoid duplication of discussions in various fora and creation of multiple standards on the same set of issues.

With regard to issues relating to preventing arms race in outer space, we recommend that it must be considered within the multilateral framework of the UN. We remain committed to the negotiation of a universally acceptable and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament.
