

Statement by India on “Existing normative and legal framework applicable to prevention of an arms race in outer space” under Subsidiary Body-3 of the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 25 March 2025

Thank you, **Mr. Coordinator** for giving me the floor.

Let me also thank my dear friend Mr. Angel for his informative and useful presentation.

Mr. Coordinator,

I have a prepared intervention for today.

India believes that Outer Space should be an ever-expanding frontier of cooperative endeavor.

It is the responsibility of all space faring nations to contribute to international efforts to safeguard outer space, and to preserve and promote benefits flowing from advances in space technology and its applications, for all.

India is a party to all major international treaties relating to outer space. This includes, most importantly, the Outer Space Treaty, and the other UN principal treaties such as the Rescue Agreement, Liability Convention, and Registration Convention.

Mr. Coordinator,

I have the following points to present on the existing normative and legal framework.

1. India affirms the applicability of international law to outer space, including the UN Charter and relevant outer space and arms control treaties to which it is party to.
2. India acknowledges that the goal of PAROS was agreed to in the SSOD-1 final document, which stated that “further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of Outer Space Treaty”.
3. India is of the view that the existing normative and legal framework on outer space contributes to the objectives of PAROS.
4. There are also shortcomings which everyone acknowledges. These shortcomings have surfaced particularly in light of new realities, including the evolving nature of outer space capabilities and activities.
5. There are however deep disagreements about what these gaps are, how these gaps are to be tackled and which part of the gap needs to be addressed as a priority. This unfortunately has been and continues to remain a highly politicized discussion, which has significant military and therefore arms control implications.
6. The international normative and legal framework, in our view, needs to be consolidated and strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users.

7. India supports the substantive consideration of the Agenda item on PAROS in the Conference, including negotiations in a subsidiary body as a part of the Programme of Work, as called for by UNGA resolution 79/19, which India co-sponsored last year and traditionally co-sponsors.
8. India believes that, as a preliminary step, priority should be accorded to developing uniform interpretations and understandings of the provisions of the existing legal treaties relating to outer space. Common understanding of terms such as 'due regard', 'harmful interference', 'peaceful purposes', among others, require to be developed in appropriate forums.
9. It is also our view that a substantial body of work has been done on enhancing outer space safety, security and sustainability in relevant forums. Mandates of various fora must be respected; overlaps and creation of multiples standards on the same set of issues should be avoided.

Mr. Coordinator,

10. Last but not the least, India believes that threats to safety, security and sustainability of outer space, considerations relating to misunderstandings, miscalculations and misperceptions, as well as threshold for what may constitute a use of force in Outer Space, must be considered comprehensively. A selective focus on certain space threats over others may be counter-productive.

I thank you.
