

**STATEMENT BY MR. MAITREY KULKARNI, DIRECTOR(D&ISA),
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AT THE OPEN ENDED WORKING
GROUP ON SPACE THREATS – Geneva, January 31, 2023**

India's views on the OEWG are recorded in the Explanation of Vote to UNGA resolution 76/231. India is however, participating in the proceedings of the group substantively and constructively. We are encouraged that this OEWG will work on the basis of consensus, and look forward to that spirit being upheld.

We would like to emphasize that India supports the substantive consideration of Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space. We remain committed to the negotiation of a universally acceptable and multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instrument on PAROS in relevant forums.

We would like to re-iterate that universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role. However, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in this field, since non-binding norms need wide acceptance to be effective; their compliance may be less rigorous; and, because monitoring compliance to these norms continues to remain a major challenge.

In terms of the discussion under the current agenda item, Mr. Chair, my delegation believes that a comprehensive view should be taken about threats to the safety, sustainability and security of Outer Space operations.

We note that the discussions of this session of the OEWG are being framed around the threats that arise from the possession of counter-space capacities.

It is not our view that counter space systems are the only reason behind the challenges to safety, security and sustainability of Outer Space. There are other challenges and these too need reflection and elaboration.

We believe that a selective focus on some threats in comparison to others should be avoided.

My delegation would also like to reiterate its concerns on subjectivity in the assessments and interpretation of space behaviors and the perception of threats; about who makes these assessments; about how these assessments are made; and about the application of such determinations. We also have concerns about the verification of space behavior using current technology and the access to relevant information and data.

We feel that the elaboration of common understandings and criteria that are accepted and understood by all uniformly; identification of areas of agreement and divergence; and the means for unbiased assessments and determinations, should be further discussed, including in this Working Group.

My delegation would like to draw your attention to the report of the GGE on TCBMs in 2013, particularly Para 34 and 35 - which state the criteria for a TCBM i.e.: it must be clear, practical and proven; and it must be able to be effectively confirmed by other parties in its application.

Thank you.