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First Committee

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Official Records

Chair: Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106 (continued)

Thematic discussion on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Chair: The Committee will first hear from the remaining speakers on the list for the cluster “Other weapons of mass destruction”. Delegations taking the floor are kindly reminded to observe the established time limits.

Ms. Warriess (South Africa): Given the horrific humanitarian consequences associated with the use of weapons of mass destruction, no cause could ever justify the use of such weapons by any actor or under any circumstances. To my delegation, it is clear that the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction should remain one of our key priorities. That includes the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

South Africa recognizes the central role of the CWC in enhancing international peace and security. We commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) over the past 20 years, with the support of the international community, towards realizing the goal of a world free of chemical weapons. In that regard, we welcome the significant progress achieved in destroying chemical

weapons and chemical-weapon production facilities across the globe. While approximately 96 per cent of the more than 70,000 metric tons of deadly chemical-warfare agents have already been destroyed, much work remains to be done. Many old and abandoned chemical weapons continue to pose hazards to people and the environment.

We welcome the progress made by the major nuclear-weapon States parties in destroying their remaining chemical-weapon stockpiles, including the recently announced completion of the destruction process in the Russian Federation, which we hope will serve as inspiration for others that have yet to complete their destruction processes. While welcoming the progress made towards the elimination of Syria’s chemical-weapon programme, we continue to be concerned about the reported use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria. No cause could ever justify the use of such weapons, and it is imperative that those responsible be called to account through a thorough investigation that is free of any political interference.

It is critical that any findings and conclusions be based on verifiable and factual information, so as to preserve the credibility of such investigations. In that regard, we look forward to the ongoing work and report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. We also commend the OPCW Director-General’s programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa and call on all States parties to the CWC to support and further enhance capacity in Africa.

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South Africa reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the implementation of the BWC to ensure that our common goal of preventing the threat posed by biological weapons is achieved. My delegation remains concerned about the threat posed by naturally occurring organisms or by those that could be deliberately manufactured and manipulated for use as weapons. In addition to security considerations, the BWC has other benefits that provide an opportunity for technical cooperation among States parties to address socioeconomic challenges in developing countries.

South Africa believes that greater international coordination and assistance is required to alleviate the burden of the threat posed by biological agents. We therefore welcome initiatives such as the exchange in biological sciences and technology, the promotion of capacity-building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, and the containment of infectious diseases, and many others that could be further explored.

South Africa regrets that the 2016 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention was unable to reach consensus on a substantive outcome or on an intersessional programme for the period 2017-2020. My delegation welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill of India as Chair of the upcoming 2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. South Africa will work constructively towards an outcome that strengthens the Convention and its balanced implementation during the intersessional period, leading towards a successful 2020 Review Conference.

In conclusion, the universalization of the BWC and the CWC is crucial for the effective eradication of all biological and chemical weapons. We welcome the recent accession of Samoa to the BWC and call upon those not yet party to those Conventions to join them without further delay.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to point out that one of the most important international mechanisms in the field of disarmament is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which has proved itself to be extremely effective in practice. The latest and perhaps most vivid example of that is the completion of the destruction of Russia's chemical-weapon arsenal ahead of schedule. As the Committee is aware, we inherited the world's largest arsenal of this type of weapons of mass destruction, and

we have honourably dealt with the task of eliminating it, thereby once again clearly affirming Russia's dedication to strictly complying with its obligations under international agreements.

The Russian Government's programme for liquidating its chemical arsenal involved, to varying degrees, participation by a number of States — Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. We are grateful to all of our partners for their assistance.

Now that this massive effort is behind us, we can say without exaggeration that Russia's elimination of its entire chemical arsenal is a historic milestone for the entire international community, and we hope that will be duly reflected in the General Assembly's draft resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention for this session.

However, we must not stop there. We call on all other countries that still possess chemical weapons to follow Russia's example immediately. That pertains first and foremost to the State that initiated the Convention, and has always actively promoted its ideas where other States were concerned, but now for some reason still possesses the world's largest arsenal of chemical weapons itself.

Against that backdrop, the attempts to cast aspersions on the great achievements of other States such as Syria are even more puzzling. Let us stop being evasive about this. In incredibly difficult circumstances, where it is fighting international terrorism on its own territory, it is the Government of Syria that has selflessly eliminated its military chemical potential under international control. Not a single other State has ever done anything like that, and any insinuations about it therefore go beyond the bounds of decency.

Any remaining questions about Syria's declaration should be resolved within the framework of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the usual way. Furthermore, Russia has consistently and steadfastly supported full and objective investigations of every case of the use of chemical weapons, including in Syria, which has been struggling with international terrorism. In order to establish the facts and the truth, the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in Syria and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mission should use all

their resources, including an obligatory site visit for collecting samples, and interviewing real witnesses, not imaginary observers, on the territory of other States. If not, there will continue to be well-founded questions and suspicions about those two bodies' activities and the possibility that they have played into the hands of one of the parties to the conflict in Syria, and definitely not the most innocent of them, either.

The attempts of various countries to begin accusing others before the completion of the official investigation are very worrying. We regard them as attempts to overturn Syria's legitimate authorities by force, as happened in Iraq and Libya. That is a very dangerous course, because it undermines the efforts to achieve a political settlement of the crisis with the participation of all Syrians, as provided for in resolution 2254 (2015).

I will be done in just a couple of minutes. The Russian initiative aimed at launching negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on drafting a convention on combating chemical and biological terrorism is more relevant than ever. It is notable that it is once again the countries that are distorting the facts and making unfounded accusations about the Government of Syria's use of chemical weapons — practically against itself — are those in the front ranks of the doubters in this regard.

Negotiating a convention to combat weapons of mass destruction and terrorism certainly does not mean refusing to strengthen the existing mechanisms' regime, particularly the Biological Weapons Convention. We call on all States, especially our two partner depositaries, to ensure the adoption at the December Meeting of the States parties to the Convention of a substantive programme of work for the 2018-2021 intersessional period. Based on that, we can consider the proposals discussed at the 2016 Review Conference, including those put forward by Russia on mobile medical and biological teams. Let us not undermine the Biological Weapons Convention further, as our partner depositaries did at the 2000 and 2016 Review Conferences. We urge everyone to work in a spirit of compromise, taking into account not just their own narrow national interests but the general, unshakable interests of international security and strategic stability.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Yemen and Indonesia on behalf of the

Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

Recent decades have shown that weapons of mass destruction constitute a threat to humankind, which could pay a high price for their use. That has prompted the international community to work to guard against the risks of the indiscriminate use of such weapons through the adoption of international instruments. Accordingly, efforts should be mobilized to prevent the tragedies of the past from being repeated, to save humankind from the horrors of those weapons and to give rise to hope for a new era without those deadly weapons.

The State of Qatar firmly believes that peace and security cannot be sustainably achieved as long as countries continue to possess weapons of mass destruction or to threaten the start of an arms race. The challenges of today's world call for greater efforts to boost development and prosperity for all nations. That should be a priority at every level.

Given the conflicts and tensions in many parts of the world, in particular the Middle East, my delegation reiterates its concern that terrorist organizations might gain access to weapons of mass destruction, which would have serious ramifications for peace and security throughout the world. In that regard, we reiterate the need to intensify joint efforts to prevent extremist terrorist groups from acquiring such weapons. That can be achieved through the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), which states that nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are a threat to international peace and security and calls on Member States to refrain from supporting non-State actors in acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. In line with our policies on eliminating weapons of mass destruction and countering terrorism, as well as our being a party to the Biological Weapons Convention and numerous nuclear-non-proliferation instruments, we continue to work with our partners in the international community to achieve those ends and seek to implement our national legal obligations in connection with the non-proliferation of those weapons, including chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, the joint responsibility of Member States requires that they work together to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, ease the fear in people's hearts and give hope, while averting the horrific

consequences of the use of such weapons, so as to achieve prosperity for all of humankind.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/72/PV.14).

Iran strongly supports all genuine, transparent and inclusive international efforts aimed at achieving the balanced, full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, together with their universalization. Iran strongly rejects any selective approach in the implementation of such instruments, as well as any attempt, under any pretext, to abuse those instruments with a view to imposing any restriction on the transfer of technology, know-how, equipment, material or goods for peaceful purposes. All such limitations should come to an end. Iran also calls for the promotion of international cooperation and assistance in those areas.

Iran strongly supports the balanced, full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention. In Iran's view, the most pragmatic option for strengthening the Convention is to resume negotiations on a multilateral, legally binding protocol to the Convention. That principle will remain our main criterion for assessing proposals in future meetings on the Convention. Given that we welcome the successful conclusion of the eighth Review Conference of the Convention and recall relevant discussions during the Conference, Iran calls for the adoption of a balanced, transparent, pragmatic, comprehensive and non-selective approach in upcoming meetings.

Iran has been the main victim of one of the largest-scale, most systematic and repeated uses of chemical weapons in contemporary history. As a result of the more than 400 attacks involving chemical-warfare agents during the war imposed by Saddam Hussein on Iran from 1980 to 1988, more than 100,000 Iranian citizens were either martyred or injured by chemical weapons. That includes more than 7,000 injuries to civilians, owing to nearly 30 chemical attacks on Iranian cities and villages. On just one occasion, Saddam's warplanes used chemical bombs to attack four residential areas of the Iranian city of Sardasht, killing more than 130 civilians and injuring almost 5,000 others. Although more than 30 years have elapsed since those attacks,

many of the injured continue to suffer from the long-term complications of the use of chemical weapons.

It is evident that Saddam's army could not have produced those inhumane weapons without the assistance and support of others. According to well-documented evidence, more than 450 companies — mostly from Western countries, including the United States — were involved in the development of Saddam's chemical-weapon programme. Given that all of those companies were under the scrutiny of their Governments, they could not have transferred chemical-weapon precursors to Saddam without those Governments' blessing.

Despite that painful experience, Iran did not retaliate for those attacks. On the contrary, it strongly supported negotiation and the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and was among the first countries to sign and ratify it. Iran continues to strongly support the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation — and the universalization — of the CWC. Iran urges all non-parties, in particular the Israeli regime, to accede to the Convention without any further delay.

In Iran's view, the total destruction of all chemical-weapon stockpiles remains the key objective of the CWC. In that regard, Iran welcomes the completion of the Russian Federation's full destruction of chemical weapons. We continue to strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the cluster "Other weapons of mass destruction".

The Committee will now take up the cluster "Outer space (disarmament aspects)".

Ms. Jenie (Indonesia): I am privileged to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM remains concerned about developments relating to anti-ballistic-missile systems and the threat of the weaponization and militarization of outer space, and reiterates its call for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a universal, legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which remains a priority. In that regard, NAM reaffirms that, as the common heritage of all humankind, outer space must be explored and utilized for exclusively peaceful purposes and for

the benefit of all States, irrespective of the degree of their social, economic or scientific development.

NAM reaffirms its position that the formulation of any code of conduct for outer-space activities should be consistent with the respective mandates of all the relevant United Nations bodies and held in the format of inclusive, transparent and consensus-based multilateral negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, based on a proper and unequivocal mandate, without specific deadlines, and taking into account the interests of all States, irrespective of their level of development, in order to reach a balanced outcome that addresses the needs and reflects the concerns of all States.

NAM continues to reaffirm the need for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral approach to the issue of missiles in all their aspects, negotiated multilaterally within the United Nations. Any initiative on the subject should take into account the security concerns of all States and their inherent right to the peaceful uses of space technologies.

Mr. Al-Dobhany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to express, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, our support for the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group believes that it is important to continue using outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. International conventions to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space will strengthen the peaceful use of outer space and should govern activities in that area. We would like to see those conventions adapted to current circumstances.

First, we agree with the Arab priorities in this area, which are rooted in the principle that outer space is the common heritage and property of all humankind. Furthermore, human activities in outer space should be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations, in accordance with the principles of universality and on the basis of international consensus.

Secondly, any attempt to govern activities in outer space should safeguard the interests of all peoples and nations and not prevent States from exercising their own rights to use space for peaceful purposes.

Thirdly, the Arab Group would like to highlight the importance of preserving outer space in times of conflict and war. In addition, weapons should not be

used for the purpose of defence or attack, and we should focus on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We should consider a binding international mechanism that would ban the use of such weapons in outer space.

Fourthly, it is important to strengthen international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space and to include developing countries among those that are already benefiting from peaceful space activities.

Finally, the Arab Group is ready to consider all initiatives relating to space security that take into consideration the four priorities that I have outlined, to affirm the peaceful nature of outer space and to work to prevent its weaponization.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Körömi (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States continue to promote the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. The EU recognizes outer space as a global common good to be used for the benefit of humankind.

The EU and its member States are increasingly important users of outer space. The EU has developed two ambitious space programmes, Galileo and Copernicus, which complement national space programmes and provide services that can substantially contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. The EU also benefits from other European space programmes of its member States and the European Space Agency. Furthermore, European space actors increasingly engage in international cooperation to help other countries to mobilize space for sustainable development.

The new EU space strategy sets out Europe's ambitions in space and confirms that we want to remain an active and globally engaged partner. Based on the values and principles enshrined in United Nations treaties, the EU and its member States will work alongside other States Members of the United Nations

to promote and protect the sustainable and peaceful use of space by all nations.

The rapid growth in human activity in space, coupled with the increased diversity of space operators, makes it ever more necessary to develop new norms and rules to govern human activity in space and enhance existing international law, transparency and confidence-building measures. In that context, a commitment by all the relevant actors to responsible behaviour is essential.

We remain convinced that transparency and confidence-building measures can make an important contribution to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. Efforts to pursue political commitments through a comprehensive approach, dealing with both the civil and the military aspects of space activities and as a complement to existing international law, remain relevant. One example is the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, originally proposed by the EU in 2008. Such efforts were endorsed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, set up by the Secretary-General in 2011 in accordance with resolution 65/68. In that context, we encourage all States interested in working together to develop common principles of responsible behaviour in outer space. Such principles could complement current international space law and existing initiatives and should be designed in such a way that they can be agreed by the majority of spacefaring nations.

Globally shaped principles of responsible behaviour should increase international cooperation in space, bring about mutual commitments to non-interference in the peaceful access, exploration and use of outer space, facilitate equitable access to outer space and increase transparency in the conduct of space activities. They should address the full range of space activities and related challenges, such as space debris, space traffic management, collision avoidance and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, with the related commitment needed for responsible behaviour. In that regard, the EU welcomes the joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly (see A/C.1/72/PV.11).

We strongly support the important work that has been carried out by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Since the establishment of the Working Group, in 2010, we have seen welcome and tangible progress, with the conclusion of negotiations on a first set of guidelines in 2016. The EU and its member States stand ready to work with all partners to conclude negotiations on the remaining guidelines by the June 2018 deadline.

The EU remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space and stopping outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential to strengthening strategic stability and to safeguarding the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes. All 28 EU member States therefore voted in favour of resolution 71/31, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We remain concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including those that 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. We continue to have reservations about 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. We reiterate our view that a new legally binding instrument would need to be comprehensive, effective and verifiable.

Russia and China have proposed the establishment of a new group of governmental experts to consider the elements of a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. Given the emphasis that EU member States have placed on non-legally-binding confidence-building measures, we regret the fact that Russia and China did not take into consideration their proposals to adjust the draft mandate to allow for a broader discussion on ways to address the security, safety and sustainability of space activity.

We are equally concerned that the initiative on no-first-placement of weapons in outer space does not adequately respond to the objective of strengthening trust and confidence among States, but instead increases the risk of conflict in space. In particular, the initiative does not address the difficult issue of pertinently defining what constitutes a weapon in outer, which could easily lead a State mistakenly to assess that another State has placed weapons in outer space.

We believe that initiatives aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space should contribute to fostering a climate of mutual trust and transparency. We therefore believe that political commitments by States to act responsibly in, toward and from outer space would be a more effective means of preserving the long-term sustainability of outer space without excluding the possibility that one day that may result in new legally binding norms.

The draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities (A/C.1/72/L.46), which is traditionally sponsored by all EU member States and adopted by consensus, demonstrates the sense of urgency and shared responsibility on the part of the international community to preserve outer space for peaceful use by all humankind. The EU therefore looks forward to working with all States Members of the United Nations to advance space security and space governance.

Mr. Tozik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and my own country, Belarus — in support of the multilateral initiative on no first placement of weapons in outer space.

The CSTO member States reaffirm their commitment to the principle of the peaceful use of outer space, a fundamental element of which is the prevention of the placement of weapons there. Noting the exceptional importance of international initiatives and political commitment to no first placement of weapons in outer space, the CSTO member States welcome the efforts made by all responsible States Members of the United Nations to realize that initiative and prevent an arms race in outer space.

The process of advancing the universalization of the initiative of no first placement of weapons in outer space, which can be justly considered to be an effective and transparent international measure for preventing an arms race in outer space, plays a key role in achieving practical steps aimed at improving approaches to the peaceful use of outer space.

The CSTO member States would like to express their support for the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use

or threat of use of force against outer-space objects. The CSTO member States urge all countries to demonstrate political will and responsibility and consider the possibility of fully subscribing to the initiative of no first placement of weapons in outer space. We also hope that the relevant draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.53) will be adopted during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Ms. Dallafior (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland believes that in order to maintain peace and stability in outer space, international norms should be strengthened. The ultimate goal is to keep outer space free from conflict and to guarantee its peaceful use for future generations.

While the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continues its work to establish guidelines aimed at strengthening the long-term sustainability of space operations, there has been little concrete progress made in maintaining stability and security in outer space. With that in mind, transparency in space activities and confidence among States play a vital role. In that regard, the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), which met in 2012 and 2013, continues to play a key role. The report includes concrete proposals that should be further developed, as well as criteria that any transparency or confidence-building measures in the space sector should meet. We welcome and support the proposal that the Disarmament Commission take up this issue starting at its 2018 session and take the Group's recommendations forward. In addition to the future work of the Commission, a next step could involve drawing up responsible rules of conduct for space activities as inclusively as possible.

With regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, Switzerland supports in principle the development of a legally binding international instrument. 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, submitted by Russia and China to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008 and 2014, constitutes a basis for discussion on the subject. However, many questions relating to that draft treaty still need to be examined. In particular, in order to be effective and to meet the stated objective, Switzerland believes that such a treaty should also ban the development and testing of land-based anti-satellite weapons.

As for the initiative on no-first-placement of weapons in outer space, Switzerland has several questions about the effectiveness of that approach in its current form. In order to be an effective first step in preventing an arms race in outer space, draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.3 should also ban the development and testing of ground-based systems able to attack or disrupt the functioning of satellites. Furthermore, it should be careful not to indirectly legitimize the subsequent placement of weapons in outer space.

Finally, with regard to the new draft resolution proposing the establishment of a group of governmental experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (A/C.1/72/L.54), the new group's mandate should be broad enough to take a comprehensive view of the topic and examine the various answers to the questions raised.

Switzerland welcomes the decision made to organize a second joint meeting between the First and the Fourth Committees on 12 October to discuss the safety, security and sustainability of space activities (see A/C.1/72/PV.11). While Switzerland welcomes those efforts to promote dialogue between the space and disarmament communities, it believes that regular and thorough discussions must take place to examine issues relating to space security and the long-term sustainability of space activities. Switzerland believes that it is important to take that work forward in an appropriate setting that is as inclusive as possible, while relying on a mandate that is broad enough to address all aspects relating to space security and the long-term sustainability of space activities. For only global, inclusive and universal action can ensure peace in outer space for our generation and those to come.

Mr. Kuatbekov (Kazakhstan): Issues of outer space are becoming increasingly relevant to ensuring international peace and security, because space, given its immensity, provides tremendous opportunities both for peaceful use and for military development. The paradox is that such potential does not have any comprehensive legal or regulatory mechanisms to prevent States from using space for military purposes.

A week ago, we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force 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, a landmark instrument of the twentieth century, which was developed and adopted to reflect the circumstances prevailing at the time. The

shortcomings of the Treaty are today apparent, and we call for its urgent revision. In that regard, the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees held last Thursday (see A/C.1/72/PV.11) was crucial to assessing the possible challenges to security and sustainability. The robust and growing expansion into space compels us to review the measures needed to overcome the gaps in the existing legal regime to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

Kazakhstan is convinced that placing weapons in outer space will result in advantages for the few. What is more dangerous is that action by some countries with advanced space-warfare technology could result in proliferation by other countries also wanting to acquire it, as has happened with nuclear weapons. Past experience has proved that, in such a theatre, military action can be concealed, thereby becoming a major breach of international security. Presently, lots of countries possess or are developing sophisticated space programmes. We need to ensure that such dangerous weapons systems do not undermine the existing structure of agreements on arms limitation, particularly in the nuclear-missile sphere.

We support the joint draft resolution submitted by China, Russia and the United States on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities (A/C.1/72/L.46). We also see great value in the draft resolution on no-first-placement of weapons in outer space (A/C.1/72/L.53), which is a positive step in confidence-building.

Kazakhstan fully endorses 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, introduced by China and Russia at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in 2008 and 2014. However, several major political hurdles and the impasse in the CD have impeded all attempts to achieve a legally binding international agreement. The provisions of the draft treaty may not take into consideration the interests of all parties, and it could be further strengthened. Nevertheless, that could be a matter for future negotiations. With that in mind, the CD is indeed the most appropriate and relevant international forum for that purpose.

Kazakhstan fully supports the proposal of China and the Russian Federation to establish a new expert group intended to further elaborate legally binding measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. We

agree with the view that, if approved by the General Assembly, the group, through its work, would help narrow differences on how the outer space legal regime could be further codified and developed, pending the end of the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

Kazakhstan has no intention of pursuing the development of space weapons or of deploying weapons in outer space. On the other hand, my country, which hosts on its territory the world's first and largest cosmodrome, Baikonur, is actively developing its national civilian space programme, including the creation of a space-rocket complex. That will enable my country to become part of the world market of space services and to have access to the latest technologies, within the norms of international collective security. In that context, the Republic of Kazakhstan reaffirms its continued commitment to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines announced in 2009, and hopes that its application to join the MTCR will be duly considered by member States during the forthcoming MTCR plenary session.

Kazakhstan has served as a member of several groups of governmental experts, including the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and on other important issues. At the same time, we are considering how to combat potential threats, such as those posed by hypersonic missiles, outer-space delivery technologies, artificial intelligence and other new and emerging perils. All those efforts demonstrate our commitment to making the world a safer and more secure place. Members will recall the very first side event, which Kazakhstan co-organized with the Office for Disarmament Affairs at this session of the First Committee and which was held in this very room on 4 October.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan would like to underscore that our common goal is to ensure that space remains a sphere of cooperation free from weapons, to be used for human development, well-being and advancement.

Mr. Eberhardt (United States of America): I am pleased to have this opportunity to address the First Committee during its thematic discussion on outer space. The United States remains committed to strengthening the sustainability, stability and security of space. We are encouraged by the growing

international recognition of the security, economic and scientific benefits derived from the use of space for peaceful purposes. How we address those challenges remains an important question for discussion within the First Committee, as well as other parts of the United Nations system. In that regard, we note the informative discussion at last week's joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability (see A/C.1/72/PV.11).

However, we remain very concerned about the commitment of some countries to the development of anti-satellite capabilities to challenge perceived adversaries, while those same countries profess a desire for the non-weaponization of space through a political commitment to no-first-placement of weapons in space that the international community cannot confirm. It is clear that those efforts will not enhance stability in space if they fail to address one of the most pressing threats — terrestrially based anti-satellite weapons.

The United States continues to advocate an approach of pursuing bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, space. In 2013, the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities concluded that

“the world's growing dependence on space-based systems and technologies and the information they provide requires collaborative efforts to address threats to the sustainability and security of outer space activities” (*A/68/189, summary*).

As a member of the Group of Governmental Experts since 2013, the United States has sponsored, together with Russia and China, resolutions 68/50, 69/38, 70/53 and 71/42, as well as this year's draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.46, on TCBMs. Those resolutions have encouraged the international community to review and to implement, to the greatest extent practicable, the recommendations of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts. The United States is pleased to note that formal and informal discussions on the recommendations of the report have been held in three United Nations bodies: the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We hope to see the UNDC add the topic as an agenda item to its 2018–2020 agenda soon.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the growing dependence of all nations on space-based systems and the information that they provide necessitates collaborative efforts to enhance stability and to address real threats to the right of nations to use outer space for peaceful purposes. The international community should consider voluntary, near-term measures that will help sustain the outer space environment for future generations, rather than continuing to engage in pointless and hypocritical posturing that fails to address the international community's actual concerns.

Mr. Hansen (Australia): Like many other Member States, Australia is highly reliant on space-enabled services for the delivery of a range of economic and social benefits. We have a correspondingly strong interest in the security and sustainability of outer space. In order to better coordinate our growing interests in this field, the Australian Government recently announced its intention to establish a national space agency.

As the number of States with an interest in outer space grows, we need to consider the best means of ensuring that we have the right rules of the road. Part of that consideration should include an examination of the existing legal framework for outer space and how to plug its substantive gaps. For instance, there are currently no bans on the deployment of conventional weapons in outer space or on ground-based anti-satellite weapons, high-energy lasers or activities that directly or indirectly create space debris. In addressing those and other issues, the question is whether legally binding agreements or the approach that Australia and other States favour of developing non-binding, norm-building transparency- and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) provide the best way to enhance space security.

Australia is one of only 16 countries that is a State party to all five space treaties, and we remain open to considering the negotiation of further practical space treaties in future. However, Australia has concerns about the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the no-first-placement initiative. Those proposed initiatives focus on preventing the placement of weapons in orbit, but are silent on the threat to space assets posed by ground-based anti-satellite weapons and high-energy lasers. Both initiatives also fail to adequately define a space weapon, which, given the high degree of dual-use space technology, may not be possible. Confusion over issues

of definitions could lead countries mistakenly to assess that another country has placed weapons in outer space. In our view, both initiatives are also unverifiable, and therefore do not effectively work as transparency and confidence-building measures for outer space.

Verifiable non-binding TCBMs provide the best opportunity for an immediate improvement in the security and sustainability of outer space and for gaining widespread acceptance. TCBMs neither limit any State's use of outer space for peaceful purposes, as codified in the Outer Space Treaty, nor do they impose requirements that could act as a barrier to the space activities of developing countries. On the contrary, transparency and information-sharing help the preservation of the space environment in the interests of all countries.

Australia was pleased to join the consensus on the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (see A/72/20) in June, which included agreement on the first 12 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We consider those to be useful and practical TCBMs. Australia also submitted a report to the sixtieth session of COPUOS on the steps that we have taken to implement the categories of TCBMs identified in the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189).

We were pleased to support the proposal, submitted by China, the Russian Federation and the United States (see A/C.1/72/L.46), for outer space TCBMs to be included on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its next session. It is entirely appropriate that the UNDC, as the deliberative body of the United Nations disarmament machinery, examine this important issue and develop a practical set of TCBMs or recommendations that can be agreed by all Member States. The product of the UNDC's work could then be taken up by the Conference on Disarmament, if appropriate.

Australia looks forward to working with all relevant stakeholders in developing a peaceful pathway for all to benefit from the tremendous opportunities offered by space-enabled services today and into the future.

Mr. Takamizawa (Japan): The importance of outer space activities has never been greater than it is today, when a growing number of nations are enjoying the economic, social and national security benefits of outer

space activities. However, serious challenges have emerged that need to be addressed with urgency.

A increase in the number of satellites in orbit has led not only to congestion in space but a greater volume of space debris, which risks severely impairing the functioning of satellites if collisions were to occur. Ensuring the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities has become a critical issue for the welfare and development of all humankind. Therefore, we should work together to mitigate the risks and dangers that threaten the stability of outer space activities.

Japan reaffirms the importance of enhancing the rule of law in outer space and will continue working with other nations to that end. In that connection, we reiterate the need to implement principles of responsible behaviour for outer space activities, which could be an important step for international rule-making. In particular, we encourage all States to refrain from any action that brings about, directly or indirectly, damage to, or the destruction of, space objects. We therefore continue to express our concerns about the development of anti-satellite weapons capability.

With regard to the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space, which we support in principle, Japan's outer space activities have always been peaceful in nature, and that will continue. We have participated in substantive discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the Conference on Disarmament, including the Working Group on the Way Ahead, established this year.

It is necessary to explore how the international community can preserve and enhance the long-term safety, security and sustainability of outer space. In that regard, it is important to build confidence and mutual trust among space actors, in particular through transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). We reaffirm our commitment to — and call on all States to review and implement, to the extent practicable — the proposed TCBMs set out in the recommendations of the report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189).

Japan has carried out a wide range of confidence-building measures, as submitted to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Japan has also engaged in bilateral and multilateral space dialogues and consultations regarding space

security, which can contribute to confidence-building among countries.

Space debris is a real threat to any type of entity conducting any type of activity in space. In that context, damaging behaviour — such as anti-satellite weapon attacks, which generate a large amount of space debris — is of great concern to the international community. Japan is seriously concerned about the actual, not the abstract, development and deployment of anti-satellite weapon capabilities, including those that are terrestrially based. The international community should address the issue as an urgent priority. In order to deal with the problems of long-lived space debris, Japan will intensify its efforts in the field of space situational awareness and in developing space-debris-removal technology.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continuing to work with other nations to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of outer-space activities.

Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Paraguay subscribes to the principle of exploring and using outer space for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of all humankind. We repudiate the use and threat of the use of force in international relations, and we will work towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which among other things requires outlawing the installation of weapons in outer space.

The delegation of Paraguay advocates full respect for the existing international legal regime on the use of outer space and for commitments to disarmament and arms limitation in space. We call for the early conclusion of negotiations and appropriate measures to prevent an arms race in space. We underscore the importance of concrete proposals for confidence-building measures and other recommendations by the Conference on Disarmament to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Paraguay is a party to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. We therefore highlight the benefits of the exploration of space and the application of space science and technology for peaceful purposes. The contribution of satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies to sustainable development and disaster and emergency response management is undeniable. The delegation of Paraguay urges all Member States to

work together to take advantage of and strengthen the opportunities for international cooperation offered by the exploration of outer space, as well as the development and application of space science and technology.

At the national level, the Government of Paraguay has established the Space Agency of Paraguay, composed of public and private institutions, with the objective of promoting and executing the development policies of national space activities and making use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The Space Agency of Paraguay, whose first Chair was appointed at the beginning of this year, is currently preparing the national space activities programme.

Finally, with regard to transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, the delegation of Paraguay emphasizes the need to ensure international responsibility for damage caused by space activities and to continue working on designing an appropriate legal regime for that purpose.

Mr. Husem (Norway): In July, Norway launched into orbit two satellites — NorSat 1 and NorSat 2 — as the first of more than 70 small satellites included in a multi-satellite launch. Those two satellites will help Norwegian Government agencies with a range of tasks, such as monitoring ship traffic, managing fisheries and conducting search-and-rescue operations in the vast open waters of the North Sea.

Those latest launches are evidence of Norway's status as a space nation, with a national launching facility for sounding rockets, a vibrant scientific community and a competitive industry. They are also examples of the considerable increase in the use of, and dependence on, outer space and space technology globally, which has brought with it a sharp increase in the number of objects in space.

Norway recognizes outer space as a global common good to be used for the benefit of humankind and is a strong supporter of a predictable and rules-based international legal order. In the face of current challenges, it is essential that all countries work together to adopt approaches for responsible activity in space in order to preserve the right of all nations to explore and use outer space for the benefit of present and future generations.

Existing governance frameworks and rules that seek to guarantee the sustainable use of space for all nations are increasingly coming under strain. This

year's session of the First Committee has a number of draft resolutions on space to consider. However, while we should be exploring ways to prevent an arms race in outer space, a new legal framework should not be an end in itself.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can make an important contribution to maintaining the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space and to preserving the integrity of the space environment for all. A non-legally-binding agreement negotiated at the United Nations and modelled on the International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, as previously proposed by the European Union, could be one way to proceed. Let me also emphasize the value of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

Norway attaches great importance to the United Nations as an arena for fostering cooperation on space among States. It is in the vital interests of the entire global community to protect the space environment for future generations. It is against that backdrop that Norway — as a responsible space-faring nation and a staunch supporter of an international framework — has this year formally submitted an application to join the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We look forward to cooperating with the rest of the international community and making an active contribution in this forum and others.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.3.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt): Egypt fully associates itself with the statements made earlier by representatives of the Group of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on this agenda item, and wishes to make the following remarks.

Egypt reiterates that outer space is the equally shared heritage of all the people of the world and a common asset for humankind as a whole. Accordingly, all activities in outer space must maintain a peaceful nature, and the United Nations should continue to strive to reach consensus on a set of legally binding rules to prevent an arms race or any placement of weapons in outer space, as well as any use of force against outer space objects.

We also reiterate that any regulation of outer space activities should in no way aim to limit its peaceful use by all States, for any applications or exploration, while

at the same time guaranteeing that no State utilizes outer space to improve its own security at the expense of the security of other States. The weaponization of outer space for any purpose, whether offensive or defensive, must be prevented globally.

The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, provides a good basis to that end. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for serious efforts to establish new legally binding instruments to complement that Treaty in the light of the relevant significant technological developments and the need for assurances that outer space will remain free of any potential conflict.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) remains the most appropriate and relevant forum to negotiate such binding rules. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the possibility and desirability of launching such negotiations in the CD, it seems necessary to intensify efforts under the auspices of the United Nations to generate significant momentum towards achieving progress on that important issue.

Therefore, for more than two decades, Egypt has joined Sri Lanka in annually putting forward in the First Committee our traditional draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/72/L.3), and this year we are seeking the usual support of the international community for that important draft resolution. For the same reasons, Egypt has also sponsored two other draft resolutions proposed under this agenda item, in the hope that they represent a positive and constructive addition to multilateral efforts aimed at ensuring the peaceful nature of outer space and properly regulating that important domain within the framework of the United Nations.

Egypt works in full cooperation with the relevant bodies dealing with outer space activities in the League of Arab States and the African Union, in order to achieve the objectives I referred to in terms of securing outer space and utilizing it for peaceful purposes. As an emerging spacefaring nation and a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Egypt urges the international community to enhance the availability and effectiveness of the relevant technical assistance and technological exchanges to all countries of the world, especially developing countries.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): Outer space is the common heritage of all humankind. It is in our collective

interests to explore and use outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. Outer space is being used by an increasing number of States for both civilian and military purposes. While our reliance and dependence on outer space applications is increasing, the potential for, and risk of, its weaponization is also on the rise. There is an urgent need to address that issue in order to prevent outer space from emerging as the new realm of conflict and an arms race.

The dominance currently 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 developing countries will neither carry the burden of non-proliferation nor accept any discriminatory restrictions that hamper their peaceful pursuits in outer space.

The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, recognized that the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and shall be the province of all humankind — 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.

Moreover, the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile systems and their integration into space assets have added another dangerous dimension. We share the concern expressed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries about the negative implications of such systems and other advanced military technologies that can be deployed in outer space. They will have wide-ranging implications for regional and international stability and security. The effects of the introduction of such systems can be particularly destabilizing for regions such as South Asia. Those concerns need to be addressed in a treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The issue of preventing an arms race in outer space has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) for three and a half decades. In our view, it is ripe for commencing 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, which was

submitted jointly in 2008 by the Russian Federation and China and updated in 2014, provides a useful basis for the commencement of negotiations in the CD.

The start of substantive work at the CD on preventing an arms race in outer space would contribute to international and regional peace and security and to strengthening the global non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. It would also end the deadlock in the CD, which is in part due to the refusal of some States to commence negotiations on the subject. If certain States continue to oppose such negotiations, then they should acknowledge their responsibility in perpetuating the deadlock in the CD.

The latest General Assembly resolution on preventing an arms race in outer space (resolution 71/31) was co-sponsored by Pakistan and adopted by an overwhelming majority of States, with none against and only four abstentions. The resolution called on the CD to establish a working group under its agenda item on preventing an arms race in outer space, which we fully support.

The General Assembly also adopted another important resolution at its previous session, of which Pakistan has been a sponsor since its first introduction, in 2013, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space” (resolution 71/32). We welcome the laudable and pioneering step by the Russian Federation to announce its political commitment that it will not be the first to place weapons in outer space, and we appreciate similar announcements by other States.

We take note of the consensus report (see A/68/189) and recommendations of the 2013 Group of Governmental Experts on transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer-space activities. TCBMs 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.

TCBMs and non-legally-binding codes of conduct are valuable for promoting trust and confidence among States. However, such voluntary measures cannot substitute for legally binding treaty-based obligations. There are clear gaps in the international legal regime governing the use of outer space with grave security implications. Those gaps must be plugged by concluding a treaty in the CD on preventing

an arms race in outer space. All multilateral efforts to develop non-legally-binding codes of conduct should be pursued in an inclusive, universal and participatory manner within the United Nations system, while taking into account the interests of all States.

Pakistan is party to all five core multilateral treaties governing the peaceful uses of outer space. Pakistan is also a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which has an important role in maximizing the benefits of space capabilities in the service of humankind, particularly in the fields of the environment, health and disaster mitigation.

Pakistan considered the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on outer space issues held in October 2015 (see A/C.1/70/PV.13) to be a positive initiative. In the same vein, we welcome the joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability held on 12 October (see A/C.1/72/PV.11).

Mr. Abbani (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of Arab States on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Outer space undoubtedly plays a significant role in the socioeconomic and scientific lives of nations, particularly in terms of the rapid technological and scientific advances in that field. More than ever, that calls for urgently establishing an environment conducive to security, transparency and confidence in outer-space activities.

Along with other States, we aspire to use outer space to meet our development goals, given that it is a common heritage of humankind. We are committed to confining the exploration and use of outer space to peaceful purposes in a manner that preserves peace, security and stability and promotes international cooperation, in accordance with the relevant international principles and commitments.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The militarization of outer space is a matter of concern, given the risk of it leading to a new arms race with serious ramifications for international peace and security, as well as socioeconomic consequences. In

that respect, Algeria expresses its concern about the negative impacts of the development and placement of anti-ballistic-missile systems in space and the pursuit of developing military technologies for outer space.

Algeria believes that the current legal regime on outer space includes some deficiencies and is therefore insufficient to guard against an arms race. That calls for extra efforts, in particular in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, in order to promote the current legal framework and to bridge existing gaps.

In that respect, Algeria supports the Chinese-Russian initiative on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the use or threat of use of force against celestial bodies. We welcome the adoption by the General Assembly at its previous session of two resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (resolution 71/31) and on no first placement of weapons in outer space (resolution 71/32), as well as the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. We also welcome the inclusion of an item on outer space on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for its upcoming session.

In conclusion, I reiterate that voluntary measures to provide transparency and rationalize activities in outer space are a new asset and should be an alternative to the conclusion of a legally binding treaty that prevents an arms race in outer space within a proper negotiation framework — namely, the Conference on Disarmament — towards the elaboration of measures and rules that meet the concerns of all parties.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/72/L.53, A/C.1/72/L.54 and A/C.1/72/L.46.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): One of the most important tasks requiring urgent action is preventing an arms race in outer space. Establishing an effective and reliable barrier to an arms race in outer space is possible only through a legally binding agreement, and that is why we are continuing our painstaking work with the aim of launching negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on developing an appropriate legally binding instrument.

The Russian-Chinese draft treaty on preventing the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat

or use of force against outer-space objects is a sound basis for those negotiations. We call on our Western partners to stop dissimulating. Our draft provides all the necessary elements, including a definition of weapons in outer space and ways to prevent any use of force against any objects in outer space. The only thing missing is the desire of our Western partners to work with every country in the United Nations to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Until the situation in the Conference on Disarmament changes for the better, it will be essential to do in-depth work on preventing both an arms race in outer space and the placement of weapons there, in the format of a United Nations group of governmental experts. To that end, together with our Chinese colleagues and with broad sponsorship from countries that share our position, we have submitted draft resolution A/C.1/72/L.54 for consideration by the General Assembly at its current session. The purpose of our initiative is to work in depth on both subjects, and we call on all States to support this important initiative.

Right now the only effective measure on preventing an arms race in outer space is this international initiative and political commitment on no first placement of weapons in outer space, which is gaining increasing support among the international community. The group of fully committed participants continues to expand and now includes 17 States. We welcome the decision taken by Viet Nam to join the initiative in June.

The no-first-placement initiative is becoming a truly serious deterrent to the placement of weapons in space. There can be no doubt that if all States commit to its obligations in that regard, especially the big outer-space Powers, on the political front the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space would be solved. The commitment to no first placement is a major measure of international trust and mutual transparency and provides support for firm positions at the national level on keeping outer space free of weapons of any kind.

We fully agree with the statement made earlier on no first placement by the representative of Belarus on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We are ready to work with all interested States on globalizing no first placement on the basis of our draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.53), which we have once again submitted with a large group of like-minded sponsors.

An important part of our efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space continues to be the work of implementing the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities. In particular, we continue to view transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) as closely linked to the draft treaty on preventing the placement of weapons in space. We believe that agreed-on TCBMs could become an interim measure to help to develop an effective regime for monitoring the implementation of the draft treaty. Moreover, individual TCBMs, after approval in international practice, could become the elements for a verification mechanism for the future treaty.

Secondly, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is doing significant work on TCBMs in the framework of an agreement on guiding principles for the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities and the safety of space operations. Some measures have already become normative provisions. We also hope that the First Committee will give due attention to the Russian-Chinese-American initiative to include the topic of TCBMs on the agenda of the next session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Chair returned to the Chair.

We call on all States to support the traditional draft resolution on TCBMs (A/C.1/72/L.46), which, as in previous years, Russia has submitted to the First Committee jointly with its two original sponsors, China and the United States. We hope to see it adopted.

Mrs. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I shall add a few additional remarks in my national capacity, the full version of which will be available online.

France is committed to safeguarding the peaceful nature of the uses of outer space. Outer space is essential to our economies and societies and has many daily applications, including in telecommunications, land, air and sea navigation and in meteorology and climate matters. In our view, the two main goals to be ensured are the long-term sustainability and security of space activities, which are key challenges for economic growth and the development of an increasing number of countries. We must prevent the deterioration of conditions in space exploitation, so that more people can benefit from space activities, and preserve access

to space for future generations. To speak plainly, only together can we meet that objective.

The outer-space environment is steadily worsening and currently faces several challenges, primarily the growing number of actors in outer space — States, private shareholders and international organizations. The growing complexity of space operations and the related emergence of mega-constellations add to security risks for space activities, such as the proliferation of space debris, the increasing risk of collision and interference during space operations. However, various intentional acts are also possible, such as the deliberate destruction of space objects, which could also create a substantial amount of debris. In the light of those challenges, the priority should be to ensure the viability and security of space activities. France believes that the international community's actions should be based on several principles.

First, the development of space activities should be carried out with respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which provide an appropriate and relevant framework.

Secondly, the international community's response should be cross-cutting and take into account the dual nature of space activities. We must promote the principle of the responsible use of outer space when conducting civilian and military space programmes.

Thirdly, responses should be effective and pragmatic, and thereby provide concrete benefits that are immediately measurable and sustainable.

Lastly, our actions should be part of a more comprehensive framework for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Moreover, in order to limit possible misunderstanding and escalation, France supports the adoption of transparency and confidence-building measures, as well as standards aimed at guiding stakeholders' behaviour in space. The added value of such measures was underlined in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), adopted by consensus in 2014, in which France participated.

Several initiatives aimed at the no first placement of weapons in outer space have been proposed at the Conference on Disarmament and in the First Committee. France shares the doubts expressed with

regard to the effectiveness of those initiatives. Without necessarily being opposed to legal approaches, France supports proposals that can be applied immediately to respond urgently to the rapid deterioration of the outer-space environment.

My country welcomes the progress made by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, which adopted a first set of 12 guidelines in 2016. We must conclude that work by next June by agreeing on a robust and consistent set of measures, including a monitoring mechanism. France will continue to actively take part in that concrete and efficient initiative. We remain open to resuming dialogue with interested States on an initiative that would complement the latter and would translate, in political terms, the commitment of all to engaging in a responsible manner in outer space, in line with the European Union proposal of a code of conduct for outer space activities, which we believe responds to a real need.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Ensuring the peaceful use and security of outer space is an important issue relating to the achievement of sustainable development. More than half a century after the first launch of an artificial satellite, outer space is no longer the exclusive realm of developed countries; rather, it is a global domain for development.

Outer space development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in full swing, in line with the policies of the State and party and reflecting the unanimous will of the people. While the purpose of outer space development is to accelerate the national economy and improve the people's living standards, the Democratic People's Republic adheres to the principles of maintaining independence and self-reliance.

Last year the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched into orbit the Earth observation satellite Kwangmyŏngsŏng-4, doing so while relying on its own strengths and technology. The respected and supreme leader Comrade Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, stressed that space, science and technology and the space industry served as important criteria for measuring national power, and that we

should manufacture and launch more satellites for various purposes using our own efforts and technology.

The scientists and technicians of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are fully and firmly determined to achieve the goals set forth in the 2016-2020 five-year plan for national space development to overcome the persistent and obstructive moves by hostile forces and to launch upgraded Earth observation satellites and geostationary satellites in the coming years.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea respects international norms concerning the peaceful development and use of outer space and attaches great importance to information exchange and cooperation with various countries and international organizations around the world.

Outer space is now faced with the potential threat of militarization. Attempts to militarize and weaponize outer space using advanced technology have become increasingly undisguised. The worldwide missile defence system of the United States and the continuing spy satellite launches of its followers are acts of extreme danger that will lead to the militarization of, and an arms race in, outer space, thereby arousing concern and anxiety in many countries.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea resolutely opposes the militarization of outer space. Every year the General Assembly adopts several resolutions aimed at ensuring security and prohibiting weapons in outer space. However, if preventing the militarization and weaponization of outer space is to be effective, it is necessary to adopt a new, legally binding instrument. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea welcomes the consideration in the Assembly of any initiative or proposal for preventing the militarization of outer space and will support draft resolutions submitted in the First Committee aimed at preventing an arms race and the placing of weapons in outer space.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes the firm position that outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, and that all countries of the world should contribute to the welfare of humankind by promoting exchange and cooperation in the field of space development in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

Mr. Mahomed (South Africa): It is widely acknowledged that outer space and its exploration for peaceful purposes is playing a vital and ever-increasing role in our daily lives. It is therefore important to ensure that substantive work is undertaken to prevent it from becoming a new arena for conflict. It is in that context that South Africa welcomes the draft treaty presented by China and Russia in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. That proposal could serve as a useful basis for further discussions in terms of the elements and scope of future legally binding instruments that may be required to prevent an arms race in outer space.

South Africa believes that the best way to promote order, safety, security and the sustainability of outer space activities and to preserve outer space as a domain for peaceful activities is through international cooperation and dialogue. We will therefore continue to support and engage in international efforts to develop rules of the road and norms for behaviour in space. In order to achieve the broadest possible adherence to such rules and norms, there is no alternative to open and transparent multilateral processes in which all interested States can participate on an equal basis. Key to such efforts is the extent to which all States are able to gain access to, and benefit from, outer space, regardless of their level of scientific, technical or economic development.

An integral component of our efforts to sustain outer space as an area for exclusively peaceful purposes is the need to adopt preventive measures to ensure that space does not become the next arena for conflict and, consequently, that an arms race in outer space does not become a reality. Some arguments have been advanced to the effect that an arms race in outer space does not exist at present. Some proponents of those arguments maintain that it is therefore premature to focus on issues related to the weaponization of outer space. While we welcome the general pledge not to allow space to become the next theatre of war and conflict, it is clear to my delegation that the weaponization of outer space by one player could prompt others to do the same, which may well lead to an arms race in outer space.

If we wait for space to become weaponized before we take action, it will not be long before we have to find yet another cure for something that could have been prevented. My delegation believes that that should be

prevented and can be prevented, if we take action now. It is for that reason that South Africa remains supportive of the earliest commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding instrument or instruments on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Beyond the commencement of negotiations in the CD on that issue, the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should also be intensified, particularly on those non-weapon issues that may have an impact on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, including space debris, which remains an issue of concern to all of us.

Given the continued impasse in the CD, South Africa supports the proposal by China and Russia to establish a group of governmental experts to consider possible instruments aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space, including a legally binding one to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space. It is our hope that such a group would stimulate discussions on the subject so as to enable progress towards the commencement of negotiations on a legally binding instrument or instruments.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, must be done for the benefit of and in the interests of all countries. That is the responsibility of all humankind. In that context, Cuba expresses concern about the threat of an arms race in outer space, the continuous development and improvement of space weapons and the presence of war materials in space, including military satellites.

We reiterate that outer space cannot become a battlefield. We need to strengthen the legal regime on outer space to prevent its militarization and to prohibit the placement of any weapons there. In that regard, Cuba reiterates its support for the adoption of a treaty for the prevention and prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space. In Cuba's view, that instrument should also prohibit the use or threat of use of force against satellites or other types of space objects. As we have previously stated, the draft treaty submitted by Russia and China in the Conference on Disarmament provides a good basis for negotiations.

Until the prevention and prohibition treaty is adopted, it is convenient and necessary to implement international transparency and confidence-building measures on outer space. We reiterate that any proposed

confidence-building measure or code of conduct should be discussed and agreed within the framework of the United Nations, with the participation and consensus of all of its Member States, and can in no way legitimize the deployment of weapons in the space. Cuba, which is fully committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, has supported the policy of no-first-placement of weapons of any kind in space.

The development of space sciences and their applications are of growing importance. Undoubtedly, they can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, environmental protection and human health. However, we note with concern the use of space technologies to the detriment of the security of nations, particularly developing countries.

Cuba condemns the existing spy satellite network, which, in addition to being incompatible with peace and development, continues to saturate the geostationary orbit and generates a large amount of space debris.

We support the legitimate right of all States to access outer space in conditions of equality and without discrimination, as well as their right to benefit from cooperation in the area of training and transfer of space applications and technology.

Cuba reiterates that it is necessary to promote more effective cooperation among States, without discrimination, in order to achieve the optimal and responsible use of the unlimited possibilities offered by space research and applications for present and future generations.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Outer space is the common heritage of humankind. Recent advancements in space technology have certainly given human development an important impetus. The concept of a shared future for humankind is best demonstrated in outer space. I should like to elaborate on China's position on security in outer space.

First, with regard to the process of preventing an arms race in outer space, the weaponization of outer space and an arms race there constitute a fundamental challenge facing the international community. Over the years, the United Nations has done a great deal of work on preventing an arms race in outer space. Since 1981, the General Assembly has adopted an annual draft resolution on the subject emphasizing the importance

and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and calling for the early negotiation of a relevant international legal instrument in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). That has been supported by an overwhelming majority of States, with no opposition from any, which fully reflects the extensive consensus among the international community on the matter.

The Chinese Government has consistently advocated for the peaceful use of outer space and is always against the weaponization of outer space and an arms race there. We have been making active efforts in promoting an international legally binding instrument on outer space arms control. China and Russia jointly submitted in the CD 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 has gained widespread support from various sides. The draft treaty fundamentally prohibits the use of force against outer space objects. It includes a ban on the use of anti-satellite weapons, and therefore effectively deals with that issue. As for the definition and verification of weapons, all those questions can be dealt with in discussions on the draft treaty. The urgency of the matter at hand means that the CD should immediately begin substantive work on it.

This year China and Russia have introduced a draft resolution entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/72/L.54), which authorizes the establishment of a United Nations group of governmental experts to focus on the substantive elements of an international legally binding instrument on preventing the placement of arms in outer space. Its mandate is focused and inclusive in nature.

Questions have been raised by some countries on the matter of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) on outer space activities. Although those have not yet been listed at length, they will surely be dealt with. The work of various United Nations mechanisms have their different focuses, which is quite natural. While focus and inclusiveness work together, we should not emphasize inclusiveness at the expense of focus.

In addition, China joined Russia and other States in sponsoring the General Assembly resolution entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space" (resolution 71/32), which was adopted with an overwhelming majority, in a further demonstration of

the common aspirations of the international community on the issue. China and Russia will continue to sponsor the draft resolution (A/C.1/72/L.53) this year.

Secondly, China attaches importance to transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities and is a major sponsor of the relevant resolutions. We believe that proper and viable TCBMs on space activities are conducive to enhancing mutual trust, reducing miscalculation, regulating space activities and enhancing space security. Such measures can be useful complements to the prevention of weaponization and an arms race in outer space. However, TCBMs have their limitations and therefore cannot replace negotiations on a legal instrument. This year China submitted its national position paper to the Secretary-General and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, elaborating on its position on TCBMs and comprehensively representing the measures taken by China in implementing the 2013 report of the Group of Government Experts (see A/68/189).

With regard to the international code of conduct presented by the European Union (EU), an overwhelming majority of countries demand that negotiations and the code must first of all have a mandate from the United Nations in the form of a resolution, be conducted within the framework of the United Nations and be adopted by consensus. It should focus on the peaceful uses of outer space. The EU should seriously consider the call of the international community and take the opinions of other countries into account so as to conduct open, transparent and truly multinational negotiations on an equal footing, within the framework of the United Nations to ensure the inclusiveness and efficiency of negotiations. In addition, together with other countries, China proposed that an item on TCBMs on outer space that would help achieve the goal of preventing an arms race be included on the agenda of the next cycle of the Disarmament Commission.

China believes that the second joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on space was very successful (see A/C.1/72/PV.11), and we would like to see that practice continued. We hope that all parties will make continued efforts to contribute to lasting peace and common security in outer space.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement under this thematic discussion delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Bangladesh has consistently advocated for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. At the Conference on Disarmament, we continue to underscore the importance of developing a universal, non-discriminatory, international legally binding instrument or instruments on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, drawing on the existing legal regime concerning disarmament, arms control and outer space use.

We have highlighted our support for commencing negotiations under an agreed programme of work on the basis of the proposed 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 thank China and the Russian Federation for proposing the establishment of a United Nations group of governmental experts on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including on the prevention of the placement of weapons. We underscore the need to ensure the equitable representation of geographic regions, as well as of countries at different levels of space science and technological capabilities in such a group.

As a State party to the Outer Space Treaty, Bangladesh continues to work on considering our possible accession to some of the other relevant international treaties concerning exploration and use of outer space. With our first communications satellite, Bangabandhu-1, expected to be launched by the end of the year, we note with some degree of concern the growing congestion, contention and competition in outer space and the resulting possibilities of compromising outer space security.

We stress that any codification initiative concerning outer space activities should be undertaken in a comprehensive and inclusive manner in order to take the various concerns on board, even while focusing on particular areas. We recognize the critical importance of various transparency and confidence-building measures as complementary to, not a substitute for, an international legal framework pertaining to outer space activities.

Bangladesh considers the joint panel discussions held between the First and Fourth Committees this year (see A/C.1/72/PV.11) as a positive step towards promoting further interface between disarmament and

international cooperation issues pertaining to outer space activities.

In parallel with disarmament efforts in outer space, there needs to be sustained attention and efforts in debris mitigation through effective international cooperation. In view of the alarming concentration of debris in outer space and the threat it poses to space objects and activities, it is critical that meaningful initiatives be taken to tackle that challenge, with the involvement of all States. The major space actors that have so far contributed to the concentration of debris in the outer space environment should also take upon themselves the added responsibility of making that expanding frontier of human endeavour safe and sustainable.

Mr. Kim In-Chul (Republic of Korea): For the ultimate goal of long-term sustainability of outer space activities, we would like to start by underlining that the development of a set of guidelines is an important priority within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). We look forward to timely progress on the remaining guidelines so that COPUOS will be able to adopt those guidelines and transmit them to the General Assembly in time for UNISPACE+50, in 2018. That would be a major achievement towards strengthening a rules-based outer space environment.

We also believe that strengthening transparency and confidence-building measures is a good start to further enhancing the current outer space regime. In that regard, we note the value of existing initiatives, including the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (see A/68/189), welcomed by the General Assembly in December 2013, and the annual draft resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Along with the international community's burgeoning interest in outer space, awareness that increased outer space activities may result in unwelcome consequences is increasing at the same time. Last week's joint panel discussion (see A/C.1/72/PV.11) was a welcome opportunity to address the relevant issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

While ensuring the safety and security of outer space is ever-growing in importance and the international community is exerting serious efforts to that end, it is deplorable that North Korea runs counter-trend. The peaceful use of outer space is a right for everyone, and it is promoted. What is proscribed for

everyone — not only North Korea — is non-peaceful uses, and North Korea's track record clearly shows us that what they claim as peaceful is not so. North Korea has openly announced standing instructions to develop "several kinds of ballistic rockets able to carry nuclear warheads". The true intention of the so-called satellite launches claimed by North Korea is not for the peaceful use of outer space, but for the development of long-range ballistic missiles that threaten international peace and security.

Another very obvious point is that what is banned for North Korea is launching activities using ballistic-missile technology, not peaceful uses of outer space itself. North Korea continues to violate a growing list of Security Council resolutions. So far in 2017, North Korea has launched 19 ballistic missiles, including two with intercontinental range. Any attempts by North Korea to portray its prohibited activities as some sort of peaceful use of outer space are groundless and must be denounced as illegal.

We call upon North Korea to cease its provocations, re-establish its pre-existing commitments to a moratorium on all missile launches and abandon any ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. North Korea shall not engage in any form of technical cooperation with other States Members of the United Nations on launches using ballistic-missile technology regardless of its characterization, including as a satellite launch or space launch vehicle. North Korea can have no claims to peaceful uses of outer space other than through fully complying with its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

I conclude by reiterating the strong commitment of the Republic of Korea to the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all humankind. We stand ready to contribute further to international efforts to ensure that space activities promote global peace, safety and security and enhance the well-being of people worldwide and that they are sustainable over the long term.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Research and development in new space technology and capabilities are progressing faster than ever. While we have every intention of applying advanced technologies for a better life, many express concerns

over the new technological impact on military purposes, and consequently on an arms race in outer space.

Applying new technological advancements and the growing use of outer space should come with greater transparency, better information-sharing and bolder confidence-building measures. All avenues to enhance global and inclusive transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities should be vigorously explored for the timely prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In that context, the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, established pursuant to resolution 65/68, is commendable. The proposed voluntary measures and recommendations set out in its consensus report in 2013 (see A/68/189) constitute a good foundation for transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). We should embrace those voluntary TCBMs as measures to promote trust among States and security for all. They should be implemented to the greatest extent possible by all, particularly by States with major space-related activities, expertise and capabilities.

Substantive discussions in the Working Group on the Way Ahead of the Conference on Disarmament this year on the agenda item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" made it clear that technological and scientific developments, as well as the evolution of threats, should be taken into consideration in discussions on the issue. We believe that a dedicated body or an ad hoc group or another group of governmental experts should be considered in order to comprehensively address space-related issues.

In addition to the basic framework of international space law as created by the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, space activities should be legally guided in a binding manner. Myanmar believes that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Against that backdrop, we welcome all efforts, proposals and agenda items on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the updated draft treaty text submitted jointly by the Russian Federation and China.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind. The exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries.

We must act together to preserve our common heritage. The prudent sees the danger.

Mr. Bektikesuma (Indonesia): With the growing exploration and use of outer space, the international community has become concerned about the increasing possibility of the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. My delegation believes that the issue of an arms race in outer space is a matter of crucial importance that requires immediate discussion. The prevention of an arms race in outer space has taken on greater urgency, considering the legitimate concerns that the existing legal instruments are inadequate to avert the militarization and weaponization of outer space.

Norms, transparency, confidence-building measures, codes of conduct and voluntary mechanisms are also important, complementary elements for any future international legal instrument for preventing the weaponization of outer space. Those measures could facilitate trust, reduce misunderstandings and prevent conflicts. To a certain extent, they have already played active roles in arms control and disarmament. However, they are not sufficient and have their own limitations, especially because they are not of a legally binding nature.

For the past two decades, the General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, has adopted resolutions on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space, calling for the negotiation and conclusion of an international legal instrument. We urgently need to conclude a new, legally binding instrument through negotiations to fundamentally prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space.

Resolutions 71/31, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", and 71/32, entitled "No first placement of weapons in outer space", reaffirm the importance and urgency of the objective to prevent an arms race in outer space. They also confirm that the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, 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 therefore believes that the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on matters related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space without delay.

We would like to reiterate our aspiration that outer space be used and explored entirely for peaceful

purposes and for the benefit of all humankind. In that regard, my delegation underscores the importance of resolution 71/90, entitled “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”. My delegation is of the view that international cooperation in space activities should be inclusive, taking into consideration levels of technological development, especially of developing countries, thereby enhancing the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that all States have a responsibility to refrain from engaging in any activity that could jeopardize the collective goal of maintaining a weapon-free outer space. 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.

Mr. Mati (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Space-based applications offer unique resources to all of us today in the domains of economic growth and innovation, as well as in facing critical issues such as climate change and natural-disaster management. The increasing reliance on space resources, infrastructure and activities makes it imperative to prevent and mitigate the risks associated with a lack of traffic management, the creation of debris, harmful interference, miscalculation and mistrust.

The sharply increasing number of objects in space is one of the major reasons why a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be set up and implemented. Italy is committed to working for the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment. Consequently, we have been one of the main supporters of the European Union draft international code of conduct for outer space activities, as a first, non-legally-binding step that would fully complement other initiatives, including a comprehensive, effective and verifiable legally binding instrument.

Despite the lack of progress in the negotiations on the international code of conduct, we continue to believe that a set of globally shared principles of responsible behaviour in outer space would be the most appropriate response to the common sense of urgency expressed by the international community. Such principles, which could lead to an international voluntary code

of conduct, should serve long-term goals across the full range of space activities. They should include non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, preventing the creation of debris, increased international cooperation in space, preserving the integrity of the space environment for all, equitable access to outer space, and increased transparency in the conduct of space exploration and exploitation activities.

We are also convinced that a crucial step towards achieving greater safety, security and sustainability in outer space activities is represented by the effective implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures, including those identified by the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities in 2013 and endorsed by the General Assembly. Transparency and confidence-building measures such as the exchange of information relating to States’ space policies and activities, risk-reduction notifications and expert visits to national space facilities reduce the risk of misunderstanding and miscommunication. They help build mutual confidence and complement the existing international legal framework.

We strongly support the important work done by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We welcome the conclusion of negotiations on a first set of guidelines in 2016 and stand ready to work with all partners to conclude negotiations on the remaining guidelines by the June 2018 deadline.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Sixty years after the momentous launch of Sputnik, which opened the way for space exploration, and 50 years after the adoption 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, Venezuela reaffirms its interest in, and commitment to, promoting and broadening the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all States and as a common heritage for humankind. The sustained development of outer space on the basis of international cooperation offers humankind great potential to continue progressing

in the areas of education, medicine, natural-disaster prevention, agriculture, telecommunications, science and technology, *inter alia*.

In that connection, our delegation wishes to reiterate the need for all States to scrupulously respect the principle of the non-militarization of outer space and to abstain from actions aimed at the use of outer space for the placement of weapons of any sort. The possible unfolding of an arms race in outer space would have destabilizing consequences for international peace and security and must be prevented by the international community through the negotiation of a new, binding convention or treaty that is equitable, viable and verifiable. Such efforts should seek to preserve outer space as the common heritage of humankind and prohibit its use for hostile purposes.

Venezuela recognizes the political commitments and voluntary agreements in this area. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of resolutions 71/32, entitled “No first placement of weapons in outer space”, and 71/31, entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”. Those are important confidence-building measures relating to outer space.

Despite the political commitments and voluntary agreements undertaken among Member States, those resolutions serve merely to supplement, rather than replace, agreed, legally binding instruments with firm, long-term obligations to prevent the militarization of outer space. Therefore, Venezuela welcomes the draft resolution proposed by China and Russia relating to the prevention of placement of weapons in outer space (A/C.1/72/L.53). We have co-sponsored it and are of the view that it provides a good foundation for the launching of negotiations that might lead to the adoption of a legal instrument to ensure that outer space remains purely peaceful in the interest of humankind.

We also call on all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to expeditiously agree upon and implement a programme of work that includes the establishment of a working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in order to pave the way for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent the placement of weapon systems in that environment.

In conclusion, Venezuela reiterates its commitment to continuing to work constructively and multilaterally in the framework of the international community to

contribute to the best use of outer space for the benefit of humankind.

Mr. Cleobury (United Kingdom): This year and next, we commemorate the anniversaries of a number of significant milestones with respect to outer space. Last week was the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force 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. The previous week was the sixtieth anniversary of the launch of Sputnik. UNISPACE+50, which will take place next year, will refocus the international community’s attention on outer space and the immense potential it holds to improve life on Earth. Also in 2018, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) will finally conclude its negotiations on guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, after almost a decade of talks. Those milestones are a good moment to think about the progress we have made in the human use and exploration of outer space, the risks and opportunities that face us and the direction in which the international community should go next.

The number of satellites being placed in space is increasing, as is the rate at which they are being placed. Over the next decade, countries could, together, place 16,000 satellites in orbit around Earth — as compared with 7,000 over the past 60 years. In February, India broke the record for the largest number of satellites — 104 — deployed from a single launch. Those developments could deliver incredible global benefits, such as ubiquitous broadband communications direct to phone in remote locations. But what are the implications of space debris? We already know that there are nearly 200 million pieces of debris in orbit around Earth, ranging in size from tiny fragments to large, dead satellites. The increasing tempo of launches can only contribute to that number. As orbits become more crowded, there is a risk that collisions could become a major source of debris in the near future. The United Kingdom is concerned that our use of space today may limit our ability to use space in future. If we want to continue to use outer space, we need to face up to the debris challenge.

There are a number of innovative technologies to remove debris that are being developed by companies and Governments in different countries. Such technologies encompass the ability to rendezvous with other space objects and grapple, grab, capture

and move them. But many countries have expressed concern about possible hostile uses of such technology. Ensuring that we use such technologies to deliver the global good of debris removal but also avoid tensions is a major collective responsibility.

In a spirit of transparency and building confidence, the United Kingdom briefed COPUOS in 2015 on its involvement in the European RemoveDEBRIS project, to develop and fly an in-orbit demonstrator mission that aims to derisk and verify the technologies needed for future active debris removal. When we license and launch that mission, it will be conducted transparently and openly.

The situation in space is complex. Environmental and security issues are deeply interlinked. We therefore need to deal with them together and in a holistic manner. In a remark that has been attributed to Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, when seen from afar the Earth seems too small for conflict and just big enough for cooperation. Just as Colonel Yuri worried about conflict and wished for cooperation on Earth, we too want to avoid conflict in outer space and to promote cooperation there. We remain concerned about the continued development of all anti-satellite weapons and capabilities, including those based on Earth, and underline the importance of addressing such developments promptly and as part of international efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space.

It is for those reasons that the United Kingdom strongly supports transparency and confidence-building measures to address the risk of conflict in outer space, and why it supports the development of voluntary agreements to encourage the responsible conduct of outer space activities across civilian and military spheres. We think that this approach — holistic and focused on responsible State behaviour — is the most pragmatic way to mitigate and avoid further damage to the space environment from debris-generating conflict or collisions.

Some countries have proposed establishing a new group of governmental experts to consider elements for a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. Like other European Union (EU) member States, we regret that they did not take into consideration the need for the draft mandate to allow for broader discussion on ways to address the security, safety and sustainability of space activity, which we and many other States consider necessary.

The United Kingdom does not rule out the possibility of one day agreeing on a new legally binding treaty on outer space, but there are serious political, technological and practical challenges that we must work through before negotiations on such a treaty could start. Any new legally binding instrument would need to be comprehensive, effective and verifiable. It would have to define what a weapon in outer space is and create trust and confidence among States by providing for adequate verification.

Like other EU member States, we maintain reservations on 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, which does not address the fundamental issues of intent and behaviour or seek to prevent the development of anti-satellite weapons located on Earth, which are of particular concern to the United Kingdom. For those reasons and others, we also share the EU's reservations about resolution 71/32, on the no first placement of weapons in space resolution.

Outer space is a global commons. Ensuring its peaceful use for the benefit of all should be a high priority, increasingly so as our countries rely more heavily on space. As we mark the important anniversaries this year and next, the United Kingdom is ready to work with all countries on practical and achievable measures to support security and ensure that we can all continue to access outer space and benefit from human space activity.

Mr. Trejo Blanco (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador welcomes the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary 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. The year 2017 marks a special milestone in the field of outer-space law, as that instrument has been ratified by 104 countries, which makes it indisputably universal. We welcome the fact that the Treaty — which has been with us since the beginning of the space age, laying down the fundamental principles that to this day govern outer space activities — is still fully valid and widely implemented.

In our view, the use of outer space is an opportunity to bolster our technical and human capabilities, as well as to contribute to sustainable development that will benefit developing countries. With that in mind, El Salvador expresses its concern about the development

of anti-ballistic-missile systems and the growing threat of the militarization of outer space and an arms race in outer space. Outer space is our common heritage and should be used for peaceful purposes for the benefit and interests of all humankind.

El Salvador supports the negotiation of a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space and encourages agreement on provisional measures to build transparency and confidence. The negotiation of a treaty or code of conduct to regulate outer space activities should be open, transparent and inclusive, consistent with the mandates of all the relevant United Nations bodies, and should take place within the Organization.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the context of the fiftieth anniversary 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, the Argentine Republic reaffirms that Treaty's key role in preserving outer space for peaceful purposes and in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations with a view to maintaining international peace and security and to fostering international cooperation.

Argentina will continue to work actively and to support the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, whose significant contribution to the creation and development of an international legal framework to regulate outer space activities we particularly acknowledge.

More than 25 years ago, Argentina established the National Commission on Space Activities — a decentralized, specialized civilian body dedicated to the peaceful use of outer space, which defines Argentina as a space-faring nation with approximately a dozen satellite missions. At the end of 2016, the National Commission drew up the 2016-2027 space plan, which envisions the manufacture in Argentina of satellites and satellite launchers, including Distributed Architecture — a model concept for the development of satellites. The objective of the new satellite series SAOCOM, which is already under development, is the measurement of soil moisture and emergency applications such as detecting oil spills at sea and monitoring water coverage during floods.

Argentina supports the non-militarization of outer space and, as the heritage of humankind, its strict use for improving living conditions and peace among the peoples living on our planet. In line with

resolution 71/31, we reaffirm the right of all countries to explore and use outer space in accordance with international law. We also reaffirm that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and is essential to promoting and strengthening international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

For all those reasons, Argentina underscores the fact that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the prohibition of the placement or use of weapons in outer space would avert a serious threat to international peace and security. As a step towards that objective, Argentina therefore supports the adoption in the First Committee of a draft resolution that establishes a commitment to not being the first to place weapons in outer space.

Argentina supports the negotiation within the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty that prohibits the placement of weapons in outer space. Until that happens, the adoption of international transparency and confidence-building measures on outer space activities is clearly appropriate and necessary, bearing in mind that article IV of the Outer Space Treaty prohibits only weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons, and not conventional weapons, let alone instruments or practices that can be used as weapons, such as interference in signals between satellites and Earth stations or among satellites, anti-satellites or information viruses.

In conclusion, the Argentine delegation would like to highlight the informal consultations on transparency and confidence-building measures to prevent an arms race in outer space that took place during the 2017 session of the Disarmament Commission. That is clearly a very timely topic of interest to all Member States, and one that we hope will be included in the Commission's work.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries delivered earlier by the representative of Indonesia.

Outer space is the common heritage and province of all humankind. All States have freedom and sovereign equality in the discovery of, and research in, outer space, which must be explored and utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes. To ensure that, the militarization and weaponization of outer space must be prevented.

Accordingly, all States must act in accordance with general principles and applicable international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The abrogation of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems opened up the possibility of the military use of outer space. Likewise, efforts in recent years for the development and deployment of national and collective missile defence systems have further triggered an arms race, with implications for outer space and regional and international peace and security. Due to their anti-satellite capability, the deployment of such systems has seriously challenged global efforts for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. International efforts should therefore be redoubled to address concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of such missile defence systems.

Iran strongly supports all international efforts and initiatives to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space, provided that such efforts and initiatives take place within the competent bodies of the United Nations and with the equal participation of all States, are conducted in an open and transparent manner, are based on consensus and duly take into account the concerns and interests of all States. In that context, Iran continues to support the commencement of substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the Conference on Disarmament.

Iran notes the complementary role of transparency and confidence-building measures on outer space activities and their contribution to efforts for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, given their intrinsic limitations, such measures cannot replace a negotiated, universal, legally binding treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. At the same time, the formulation of any politically binding instrument in that regard should be pursued within the United Nations in an equitable, open and transparent manner, duly taking into account the concerns and interests of all States. Any possible decision thereon should be made by consensus.

Iran also underlines the right of all States to the peaceful application of space technologies, which are indispensable tools for sustainable development. Therefore, access to outer space through space science, techniques and technologies should be available to all countries. Likewise, any attempt to turn space

technology into the monopoly of a few countries or to impose any restriction on the transfer of space-related science, know-how, technology or services to developing countries should be seriously avoided.

Recalling the joint meetings of the First and Fourth Committees on emerging challenges to space security, we believe that such meetings should be conducted without compromising the mandate, role, powers or functions of the competent bodies of the United Nations, in particular the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The joint meetings should also not duplicate or replace the activities of such bodies.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that our deliberations in the Committee should enhance international efforts to prevent the militarization and weaponization of outer space. My delegation stands ready to support all genuine efforts aimed at ensuring that that realm will always remain exclusively for peaceful purposes and uses.

The Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty, which, along with the 1968 Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention and the 1976 Registration Convention, provides a foundational framework to ensure that the conflicts that plague States on Earth do not extend to outer space.

In seeking to address the security aspects of the outer space environment and to prevent an arms race, the work of the First Committee is linked to the work of the Fourth Committee, with its focus on the peaceful uses of outer space. My delegation therefore appreciates the fact that the two Committees held a joint meeting yesterday on the possible challenges to space security and sustainability with a view to addressing that linkage.

The enormous contributions of the peaceful uses of outer space to human progress are beyond doubt. As in many other scientific fields, however, technologies for the exploration and use of outer space can be double-edged; they can be used for both peaceful and bellicose ends. Therefore, to prevent the real danger of the militarization of outer space and the consequent arms race, the tremendous advances in outer space technology must be accompanied by a corresponding

heightened sense of responsibility to limit the employment of such means to peaceful uses.

In the digital age, humankind has become ever more dependent on space technology for the conduct of everyday life. Life on Earth has become vastly regulated by satellites circling in outer space. It is therefore becoming more and more exposed and vulnerable to attacks against the space technology that regulates the services and resources upon which contemporary life depends, in particular in the big cities. The impact of a war in space on civilian life could therefore be far more devastating than an armed conflict on the ground. That is a real-life scenario. The militarization of outer space, and especially an arms race, must therefore be prevented at all costs.

The international cooperation among the member countries on the design, development, operation and utilization of the International Space Station is a good example of ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space technology and minimizing the dangers of its weaponization. A contrary sign is the testing being done by a number of States to deny satellites their functionality or destroy them outright — a practice that, among other things, leads to large quantities of debris polluting outer space and poses a serious threat to other satellites and to astronauts.

The crucial importance of the outer space environment to all nations necessitates that that common space be treated in ways that go beyond traditional notions of national sovereignty, or how we legally treat oceans or international airspace. The Holy See welcomes the recommendation by China, the Russian Federation and the United States, proposed in the spring at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, to take up transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) for outer space. It continues to regret, however, the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to pursue work under its agenda item on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Work is needed not only on TCBMs, but also on security-building measures to ensure that outer space does not become a place where our earthly conflicts are extended. It would be useful to guarantee that space-launch vehicles are not a cover for ballistic missiles.

Finally, my delegation would like to note that the objective of safeguarding the peaceful character of outer space does not mean that satellites will not be used for useful activities below, including in the

fields of security and defence. The use of satellites for observation is critical for vast humanitarian operations — in monitoring and mapping the effects of climate change and in gathering evidence of possible genocide and other mass atrocities. Satellites are therefore critical to weather forecasting, the blogosphere and the entertainment industry, to name a few areas. In the area of disarmament they are critical for the strict verification of the observance of arms control and disarmament agreements.

The joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees to discuss outer space makes clear that the sustainability of outer space must rule out the weaponization of outer space technology and the militarization of outer space.

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker under the cluster “Outer space (disarmament aspects)”.

I shall now call on those delegations that have requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On the issue of Japan’s abandoned chemical weapons, China has repeatedly elaborated its principled position, in view of the repeated claims of the Japanese delegation that it is China’s non-cooperation that resulted in delays in the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons. In that context, I want to clarify two points.

First, China will obviously cooperate with efforts to destroy Japan’s abandoned chemical weapons, which cause existential harm on China’s own territory. That is clearly only common sense. Secondly, if Japan is not providing records of its abandonment and burial of chemical weapons, that means it is not taking seriously the fact that it has to improve its contribution to solving the problem. How can China’s cooperation do it alone?

Yesterday Japan said it would increase its input (see A/C.1/72/PV.15), which is good. China wants to see real action from Japan. We urge it to continue to improve its part of the efforts to deal with the problem as quickly as possible, to remove its abandoned chemical weapons as completely and thoroughly as possible and to return a clean piece of land to the Chinese people as soon as possible.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise my right of reply in connection with the lies and groundless accusations

of the South Korean representatives. South Korea has already exercised its right to talk to about the legitimate right of our peaceful use of outer space. We have seen the number of satellites launched by South Korea, which are all military and spy satellites. My delegation completely rejects the groundless accusations made by South Korea in an attempt to confuse our peaceful satellite launch with that of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The peaceful use of outer space is internationally recognized as the legitimate right of sovereign States, regardless of the size of their territory and any difference in political opinions, and therefore all countries should respect that legitimate right. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea attaches priority to the peaceful use of outer space. The peaceful activities of the Democratic People's Republic in outer space are intended to build an economic power and improve people's standard of living. Space development for peaceful purposes is a sovereign State's legitimate right recognized by international law. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is fully determined to exercise that right, no matter what others may say about it.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I want to make some brief remarks in response to some comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation a bit earlier. There were indirect comments about a country that — I believe this was said — has not yet completed the destruction of its chemical-weapon stockpile. Let me say that the United States remains committed to the complete destruction of its declared chemical-weapon stockpile by the end of 2023. The United States Government continues to focus on destroying the remaining portion of the chemical-weapon stockpile stored in Pueblo, Colorado, and Richmond, Kentucky.

Briefly, there was also some note by the Russian representative that some States had made contributions to Russia's efforts to destroy its chemical-weapon stockpile. For our part, the United States provided more than \$1 billion in financial and technical assistance to the Russian Government to assist it in completing the destruction of its chemical-weapon programmes. I want to be on the record letting everyone know that

the United States was a substantial contributor to that effort.

Mr. Kim In-Chul (Republic of Korea): This is in reply to the most recent North Korean statement. I thought that my remarks were so plain and clear that they would not invite any further remarks from them, but they did speak.

I will start my reply by referring to — I could quote the whole thing — article III of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which holds that the use of outer space shall be in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security. The international community has written here, under the Charter, that it has decided that North Korea should not launch anything using ballistic-missile technology. It is as clear and as plain as day, and there is no room for any kind of doubt. I do not know why they are repeating what they are saying.

I would like to again stress that no one can think it is terrible to pick and choose, to swallow what is sweet and spit out what is bitter, and in the absence of anything sweet in this world for them, try to fabricate something sweet that is not sweet at all. As they speak from their moral emptiness, they really sound empty. They are constantly trying, with that emptiness, to make the claim that they are not responsible. But they are the responsible party, and it is up to them to resolve the situation. I remind them that it is up to them to resolve the situation through dialogue.

Mr. Ri In Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am going to exercise my right of reply to the South Korean representative, who has made a groundless accusation again. I have already made things clear in my first right of reply, so I will not repeat that, but I want to make clear that South Korea has no right to talk about our legitimate right to the peaceful use of outer space. As a second piece of advice, I suggest South Korea study the Charter of the United Nations and international law first.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.