

Agenda Item 5: Ways and Means of Maintaining Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes

Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates,

India strongly believes that outer space should be utilized for peaceful purposes and its preservation for the benefit of all humankind should be a priority of all space-faring nations. Actions in space have consequences that are essentially global in nature. Therefore, space activities need to be conducted in line with international laws, regulations and norms to guarantee the long-term and peaceful use of space. By being party to all the major international space treaties and regulations, India upholds the principles for peaceful uses of outer space enshrined in the existing legal space regime.

Mr. Chair,

As the number of space objects continues to grow, it is crucial to regularly track and monitor activities in space to mitigate the associated risks and threats. In this context, developing dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) capabilities is essential to ensure safe and sustainable space operations. India has undertaken several efforts to strengthen its SSA capabilities and aims for further enhancement through relevant data sharing and collaborations.

At present, India follows the UN and IADC recommended space debris mitigation guidelines to the maximum extent practicable in its space missions to contain the proliferation of space debris and continually strives for improving compliance with these guidelines. India believes that new measures need to be formulated to tackle the unprecedented challenges that arise due to the rapid, transformative changes with the ever-widening scope of space-based activities.

Mr. Chair,

In addition to the space treaties and regulations, India believes that the UN Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities play a crucial role in supporting efficient and sustainable use of outer space by all countries for peaceful purposes. The work of the LTS Working Group will be important in enhancing the implementation of adopted guidelines and further studying the challenges to the sustainable use of outer space in the rapidly changing global space scenario. While being involved in the activities of the UNCOPUOS LTS Working Group, India is also an active member of several international bodies dealing with the issues of space situational awareness, space traffic management and safety and sustainability of space operations.

Given the rise in the number of private entities in the space sector, India endorses raising awareness among the new space actors on the vulnerability and the risks of operating in space and of the ways and measures to mitigate such risks through the adoption and implementation of the space debris mitigation guidelines and UN LTS guidelines.

Mr. Chair,

The Indian Space Policy -2023 includes the mandate to establish of a framework to ensure safe and sustainable operations in compliance with relevant international guidelines. It is desirable for all member states with national regulations and policies related to space operations to share information and relevant experiences with countries still developing their domestic policies.

Mr. Chair,

India firmly believes that Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) play a crucial role in ensuring peaceful uses of outer space. Enhancing cooperation and collaboration with other space faring nations for the exchange of data, knowledge, best practices and experience are found to yield substantial benefits in ensuring safe and sustainable space operations. Lastly, supplementing voluntary and non-legally binding measures with suitable legally binding measures is needed to maintain outer space for peaceful utilization and exploration by posterity.

Thank you Mr Chair and distinguished delegates for your kind attention.