



General Assembly

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**Open-ended working group on reducing space threats
through norms, rules and principles of responsible
behaviours**

Geneva, 30 August–1 September 2023

Agenda Item 6 (c)

**Consideration of issues referred to in paragraph 5 of General Assembly
resolution 76/231 of 21 December 2021: to make recommendations on
possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours relating
to threats by States to space systems, including, as appropriate, how they
would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments,
including on the prevention of an arms race in outer space**

**Document from the Russian Federation on possible elements
of the outcome report prepared by the Chair of the
open-ended working group established by United Nations
General Assembly resolution 76/231, under agenda item 6 (c)**

Submitted by the Russian Federation

1. The Russian Federation has studied the possible elements of the final report of the open-ended working group established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/231, prepared by the Chair of the open-ended working group, under agenda item 6 (c).
2. We are forced to note that the text is unbalanced and does not take into account the full range of positions of United Nations Member States on questions of space security; it reflects mainly Western approaches. Specifically, the term “responsible behaviour”, which has not garnered consensus, and a range of concepts (including the applicability of international humanitarian law to space activities and “space objects requiring special protection”) have once again been used. A significant part of the document is devoted to issues falling under the competence of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and that have been successfully discussed on its platform. We are convinced that it is counterproductive to duplicate the mandate of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the discussions on that platform, and also to include the corresponding formulations in the report of the open-ended working group.
3. For our part, we consider it necessary to include the following understandings in the draft outcome document:
 - (a) The document should reaffirm our commitment to the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978 with the aim of ensuring the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, preventing an arms race in outer space and launching relevant negotiations in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.
 - (b) It should note that preventing an arms race in outer space is in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and is an essential condition for the promotion



and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

(c) It should recognize the imperative and priority of developing and concluding an international legally binding instrument for the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects and the fact that transparency and confidence-building measures or political commitments cannot prevent an arms race in outer space, including the placement of weapons in space and the use of force or threat of force in, from or against space, and should maintain outer space as an environment free from armed conflict and hostilities.

(d) It should highlight the inability of existing international treaties related to outer space and the legal regime provided for therein, notwithstanding the positive role they play in regulating outer space activities, to fully prevent the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space, from space against Earth and from Earth against objects in outer space, and to preserve outer space for exploration and use for peaceful purposes. It should outline the need to strengthen and consolidate this regime.

(e) It should emphasize as a priority the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in all its aspects.

(f) It should strongly urge the early start of substantive work on a multilateral legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space on the basis of the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use of force or the threat of force against outer space objects, as introduced by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament in 2008, and as revised in the version of 2014.

(g) It should point out that, while such an agreement is not yet concluded, other measures may contribute to ensuring that weapons are not placed in outer space. In this regard, it remains necessary to undertake an international initiative/political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space.

(h) It should reaffirm the need to study transparency and confidence-building measures in the search for effective and verifiable bilateral and multilateral legally binding agreements for the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to ensure the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes. It should emphasize the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures as an integral element of an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These are the measures that will ensure, inter alia, the resolution of disputes arising from the implementation of the future treaty.

(i) It should also reaffirm that transparency and confidence-building measures should focus on enhancing space security and sustainability, and especially on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the development of a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Such measures should complement, but not substitute for, a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. They must facilitate a total ban on the placement of weapons in space, and the use of force or threat of force, against or with the assistance of space objects.

(j) It should note the commitment to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency and confidence-building measures of 2013 and the recommendations adopted by consensus by the United Nations Disarmament Commission to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in space, in the interests of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency and confidence-building measures. Transparency and confidence-building measures drawn up multilaterally will have the best chance for adoption by the international community.

(k) It should note that, in general terms, transparency and confidence-building measures are a means by which Governments can share information with the aim of creating mutual understanding and trust, reducing misperceptions and miscalculations and thereby helping both to prevent military confrontation and to foster regional and global stability. In addition, such measures can help to increase confidence in the peaceful intentions of States

and can help States to raise awareness, provide greater clarity of intent and enable a predictable strategic economic and security environment.

(l) It should emphasize that the exclusion of outer space from the sphere of the arms race and the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes should become a mandatory norm of State policy and a generally recognized international obligation.

(m) It should call upon all States, and above all those with major space capabilities, to this end:

- To take urgent measures to prevent for all time the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force in outer space, from space against Earth and from Earth against objects in outer space
- To seek through negotiations the early elaboration of appropriate reliably verifiable legally binding multilateral agreements

(n) In concrete terms, United Nations Member States should undertake the following commitments:

Not to use space objects as weapons against any targets on Earth, in the air or in outer space;

Not to create, test or deploy weapons in space for any purpose, including for missile defence, as anti-satellite capabilities or for use against targets on Earth or in the air, and to eliminate any such systems already in the possession of States;

Not to create, test, deploy or use space weapons for missile defence, as anti-satellite capabilities or for use against targets on Earth or in the air;

Not to destroy, damage, disrupt or alter the trajectory of the space objects of other States;

Not to use civilian space systems, space technologies and services for purposes other than their stated peaceful purpose;

Not to assist other States, groups of States or international, intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, including non-governmental entities established, incorporated or located in territory under their jurisdiction and/or control, in engaging in the above-mentioned activities and not to encourage them to do so;

(o) It should declare that the category of space hazards and threats arising from and related to the exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes is the subject of discussion by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Any decisions regarding this category should be taken solely in the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It should call for further discussion of said category in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

(p) It should note that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee, has a fundamental role to play in increasing transparency and trust among States and in ensuring that outer space is maintained for peaceful purposes. This is reflected in the report of its fifty-eighth session.

4. We expect that the approaches of principle of the Russian Federation described above will be taken into account in the draft final report of the open-ended working group, so as to ensure its adoption at the final session, in August this year.