



Open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behavioursGeneva, 28 August – 1st September 2023

Agenda item 6

Consideration of issues contained in paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/231**Working Paper on a cross-regional initiative in support of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules, and Principles of Responsible Behaviours****Submitted by Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands and the Philippines.**

At the Fourth Session of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours on behalf of thirty-four countries, the following joint statement was delivered in order to contribute to the substantive discussion and to collectively express support for the OEWG and its successful outcome.

“Mister Chair,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Germany, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and my own country, the Philippines.

We thank you and the Secretariat for your tireless efforts to make this OEWG a success.

We jointly express our appreciation for the OEWG process, which has inspired open, substantive, interactive, and enlightening discussions pertaining to outer space security.

We believe the OEWG has proven itself as a constructive platform for an inclusive dialogue among Member States with the participation of all relevant stakeholders on reducing space threats. It is complementary with the mandates of the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and the newly established Group of Government of Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It also supports the PAROS agenda.

The sessions of the OEWG have demonstrated a significant interest among states in finding converging views on reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviours.

We welcome your draft consensus report as a solid basis for our work on the OEWG’s report.



We urge all delegations to work with an open mind and a flexible and constructive spirit towards a substantive report that will reflect the following elements:

First, the report should note that the OEWG has taken stock of existing international legal and other normative frameworks concerning threats and risks arising from behaviours with respect to outer space.

It should, among others, reaffirm the continued applicability of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It should note the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty that are relevant to the OEWG's work and reaffirm that applicable international law also includes other relevant treaties as well as customary international law, the law of state responsibility, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law.

Second, the report should note that the OEWG has considered current and future threats by states to space systems and actions, activities, and omissions that could be considered irresponsible.

It should affirm that work on elaborating norms of responsible behaviours in outer space is a useful means towards addressing threats in outer space. All activities by states in outer space must be carried out in accordance with international law. It is also important that such activities are conducted with due regard to the corresponding rights and interests of other states.

It should note that the OEWG provided an important opportunity for states and other stakeholders to enhance their understanding of how states view threats to outer space security, including in space-to-earth, space-to-space, earth-to-space, and earth-to-earth dimensions.

Third, the report should contain 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 PAROS.

While we acknowledge that much work needs to be undertaken this week to achieve consensus on many areas, we believe that consensus could be found on the following thematic areas: application of existing international law to the space environment; enhancing transparency and building confidence; addressing the threats of destruction and incapacitation of space objects, which generate debris; addressing rendezvous operations and proximity operations that could increase the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation; and protecting critical space-based services to civilians.

Finally, the report should further reaffirm that political commitments on responsible behaviours can be developed in support of, and without prejudice to, the pursuit of legally binding measures and instruments in this area. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive.

Mister Chair,

The work we have done in this OEWG is an excellent starting point that complements other efforts related to enhancing outer space security, including the newly established GGE on PAROS. A follow-up process to the ongoing OEWG, aimed at further convergence between these tracks, should be considered.

The inclusive nature of this process, in terms of both participation of stakeholders and the range of issues and measures that could be discussed, makes it an invaluable platform that ensures that the voices of all states are heard on an issue that affects us all.

Our delegations will continue to work constructively during and beyond this OEWG to ensure the success of this process.

Thank you.”
