



Bangladesh

Statement under the Thematic Discussion on “Outer Space (Disarmament Aspects)” at the First Committee of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, 19 October 2016 in Conference Room 4

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under this agenda item.

The ever expanding use of space technology and services in our socio-economic development efforts has raised the stakes for us in promoting the safety, security and long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We subscribe to the fundamental premise laid out in the Outer Space Treaty that the exploration and use of outer space shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, and shall be the province of all humankind.

Bangladesh has consistently advocated for exploration and use of the outer space for peaceful purposes and for the prevention of an arms race in the outer space. In the Conference on Disarmament (CD), we continue to underscore the importance of substantive discussions under the agenda item “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space”, and have flagged our support for commencing negotiations under an agreed Programme of Work on the draft Treaty introduced by the Russian Federation and China on prevention of placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects. In the same spirit, we continue to co-sponsor the Resolution titled “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” in this Committee.

As an aspiring space-faring nation, with our first communication satellite *Bangabandhu 1* projected to be launched into space orbit by the end of next year, we note with some degree of concern the growing congestion, contention and competition in the outer space, and the resulting possibilities of compromising outer space security. We, therefore, stress the importance of developing a universal, non-discriminatory international legally binding instrument on prevention of arms race in the outer space, building on the existing legal regime concerning disarmament, arms control and outer space use. We share concerns over developments with anti-ballistic missiles, in particular, that aggravate the risks of weaponization of outer space to the detriment of the interest of space actors and space users alike.

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 the outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

We recognize the critical importance of various transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs) as complementary to, and not substitute for, the existing international legal framework pertaining to outer space activities. We refer to the useful recommendations on potential outer space TCBMs contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts constituted pursuant to GA Resolution 65/68 as a useful basis for further work in this regard. Among other issues, Bangladesh considers the proposed joint panel discussion between the First and Fourth Committees to be convened next year as a step in the right direction towards promoting further interface between disarmament and international cooperation issues pertaining to outer space activities.

We stress that any codification initiative concerning outer space activities be undertaken in a comprehensive and inclusive manner in order to take the various concerns on board, even while focusing on any particular areas.

In parallel with disarmament efforts in the 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 they pose to space objects and activities, it is critical that meaningful initiatives be taken to tackle this challenge with the involvement of all States, logically based on a 'common but differentiated approach'. The major space actors that have been mostly responsible for damaging the outer space environment till date should also take upon themselves the added responsibility to make this expanding frontier for human endeavour safe and sustainable.

I thank you.