



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 25 May 2018

Subsidiary Body 3 (PAROS)

Mr. Coordinator,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your appointment and thank you for your willingness to guide the work of Subsidiary Body 3. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Coordinator,

Italy remains fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and to preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict as essential conditions to strengthen strategic stability. Strategic stability will also allow all States to benefit from peaceful uses of outer space and the opportunities for development these can provide.

In this regard, we deeply value the substantive work conducted also in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to the discussions within this SB and we hope that they will contribute to deepen our understanding on this topic.

We hope that the GGE on PAROS, established by UNGA Resolution 72/250 and in which Italy will take part, could be another useful framework that can contribute to the goal of advancing the work of the CD on this issue.

In this regard, let me recall the relevance of the five treaties and five sets of principles on outer space, as well as other relevant documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, which are the cornerstone of international space law, and the importance of promoting the effectiveness, authority, and universalization of existing instruments.

At the same time, developments in the amount and pace of space activities and their changing paradigm – from being dominated by government programmes to being more and more participated by private companies – are a source of both opportunities and challenges, which were unknown at the time when the current legal framework was gradually put in place.

Today, space-based applications offer unique resources to all of us, also in the domains of economic growth and innovation. Internet is very much dependent on space. Satellite systems are essential for monitoring land, maritime and air security, as well as in facing critical issues such as natural disaster management and climate change. In this sense, the space domain enables a number of services, which have become essential for the well-functioning of our economies and for our security.

The growth in the amount of human-space activity and the sharply increasing number of objects in space, as well as our growing reliance on space resources, infrastructures and activities, are among the major reasons why a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put into force. States must commit to enhancing the wellbeing of humankind by working together for the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment.

We therefore reiterate our strong support to the very important work that has been carried out by the COPUOS Working Group on the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, in which Italy is currently engaged. We welcome the conclusion of negotiations on a second set of LTS guidelines at the beginning of this year and stand ready to work with partners to conclude negotiations on the remaining guidelines by the deadline of June 2018.

We also believe that a non-legally binding instrument covering at the same time substantial aspects of safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities could further build upon the LTS guidelines. Such an instrument could be the appropriate approach to politically commit nations on globally-shared principles of responsible behavior, and associated transparency and confidence building measures (TCBMs). Principles of responsible behavior to be incorporated in such a voluntary instrument should serve long-term goals across the full range of space activities. These should include non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space; prevention and mitigation of the creation of debris; increasing international cooperation in space; preservation of the integrity of the space environment for all; equitable access to outer space; increasing 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 (TCBMs), including those identified by the Group of Governmental Experts in 2013, endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

This set of TCBMs may be established by the proposed non-legally binding instrument, covering mechanisms of (i) information sharing related to national space strategies, policies and programmes, (ii) notification regarding space missions and manoeuvres with a view to reducing the risk of misunderstanding and miscommunication and improving space traffic management and (iii) consultation with a view to decreasing the risk of disputes and solving any type of dispute.

Mr. Coordinator,

We take note of the views expressed by some delegations that voluntary measures, including TCBMs, cannot be a substitute for a legally binding instrument on PAROS. We are aware that positions diverge on whether or not we need a legally binding instrument. Yet, notwithstanding these differences, there is general agreement on the key relevance of voluntary and non-legally binding TCBMs in outer space activities for the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, and increasing peace and security in outer space.

Therefore, we are encouraged by the fact that the agenda of UNDC for the current three year cycle includes an item on the elaboration of recommendations to promote the practical implementation of TCBMs in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, in accordance with the 2013 GGE recommendations. We highly value the discussions which were held earlier this year.

TCBMs help indeed build mutual confidence and are complementary to the existing legal international framework. Italy fully supports these goals, and stands ready to give its contribution towards their implementation through a non-legally binding instrument to be negotiated within the UN framework, as a first step, which would be fully complementary to other initiatives, including a comprehensive, effective, and verifiable legally binding instrument.

Thank you.