



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament
Thematic Discussion on PAROS

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Leonardo Bencini,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

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Madam President,

I would like to thank you for this thematic debate on such a topical issue for the work of the Conference. Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union; I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy welcomes today's substantive discussion, as a contribution to our common goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We believe that there is an urgent need to improve space security in an increasingly congested, contested and competitive space environment.

The current legal framework governing space activities, which has its cornerstone in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, needs to be further strengthened and consolidated, considering the pace at which space activities are developing and diversifying. While new opportunities are opening up, we face the challenging task of ensuring that outer space remains an operationally stable and safe environment. To this end, we support a broad-based approach that includes examining existing international law, developing options for trust and confidence-building measures as well as possible legally binding measures in the future.

In this regard, Italy fully supports the activities of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) pursuant to UNGA Resolution 76/231 aiming at reaching a common understanding of how best to act to reduce threats to space systems in order to maintain outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable and sustainable environment. Norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, including transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities can in fact complement the existent legal framework governing space activities. In addition, they can serve as non-binding tools for the gradual evolution of international law and can be an important intermediate step in maximising the chances of a successful outcome of future negotiations for legally binding instruments.

Madam President,

Talking about CBMs and making progress towards negotiations, we believe it would be interesting for Member States of the CD to inform this body about their national space security policy, strategy or doctrine. For this reason, I would like to use this opportunity today to recall some elements of the **Italian National security strategy for space**, approved in 2019 under the auspices of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers as a part of our National Strategy for Space.

In the last fifty years, Italy has developed proprietary space capabilities in the field of Telecommunications and Earth Observation. Moreover, at European level, we actively contribute to the development and implementation of important programmes and scientific missions. So, our National security strategy aims at strengthening and protecting national public and private space infrastructures, and it serves as a reference for institutional, industrial, scientific and commercial organizations in developing their plans, schedules, acquisitions and operations.

The **strategic objectives** that our strategy pursues, through the involvement of all the institutions responsible for State security and defence, are essentially five:

- a) To ensure safety and security of space infrastructures, regarded as enablers of the national infrastructure as a whole;
- b) To safeguard national security, including by ensuring access to and use of national security capabilities in any given situation;
- c) To strengthen and protect the institutional, industrial and scientific sectors, also with a view to protecting national classified information;
- d) To promote a space governance capable of ensuring sustainable, safe and secure space operations at international level;
- e) To ensure that the development of private initiatives in the space sector is consistent with the National overriding interests.

Having in mind these five objectives, Italy implements its National Security Strategy for Space through the following **strategic lines of action** of an operational, procedural and legal nature. These can be summarized in the following four points:

- a) Strengthening and protecting national space capabilities;
- b) Protection and supervision of the development of industrial and scientific activities and protection of classified information;
- c) International cooperation and promotion of a responsible, peaceful, safe and sustainable use of space.
- d) Management and development of commercial initiatives in compliance with the international commitments undertaken by Italy and with the national security requirements.

In light of the strategic nature of space infrastructures and their intrinsic link with the national security and protection architecture, it is essential to adopt a stratified and all-inclusive approach to prevent, deter and, if necessary, defend against hostile attitudes. Moreover, strengthening and protecting national capabilities will remain vital to increase the national security and resilience in response to crises and emergency events.

Madam President,

We remain concerned by kinetic threats, such as the persistent development or testing of anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles, damage and collisions resulting from risky maneuvers or other dangerous behaviors. In this context, we welcome the commitment made by several States not to conduct destructive tests of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles.

Non-kinetic threats such as cyberattacks, electronic warfare to overwhelm satellites and compromise their operation or use of laser beams to damage optical sensors are also on the rise. Hybrid space operations encompass an increasing number of sectors, adding an extra layer of complexity to risk and threat assessments.

We are convinced that it is important to develop initiatives aimed at increasing confidence and mutual trust between current and future space actors. Moreover, we regard security in space as a multi-sectoral and global issue that requires the engagement of not just UN Member States but also of international organisations, commercial actors and civil society.

I thank you, Madam President.