



**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Te Aka Aorere**

UN General Assembly: First Committee

**New Zealand Statement on Outer Space delivered by
Ms Erin Morriss**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on outer space.

In the 21st century, all countries have a strong interest in ensuring the safe, responsible and peaceful use of outer space. We all rely on space-based systems to provide crucial services ranging from navigation to banking, weather monitoring and telecommunications, as well as important defence and security capabilities. In addition, New Zealand is cognisant of the scientific and other potential benefits that outer space carries, and the need to preserve the integrity and sustainability of the outer space environment.

Access to space also plays a role in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Space-based systems provide information to enable sustainable use of natural resources, agricultural monitoring and delivery of education and health care to isolated regions, and humanitarian aid to disaster stricken areas. Space assets can provide early warning of natural disasters and improve responses in their aftermath.

It is therefore in our collective interest, as Member States, to ensure the safe and secure access to and use of space, and a space environment that is sustainable, peaceful, and free from conflict.

Chair,

To this end, New Zealand would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work underway in the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour, established by resolution 76/231.

New Zealand is a strong supporter of this workstream. We see the development of norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour as a pragmatic first step towards mitigating the risk of escalation of tensions through the perception of threat. We welcome the broad and constructive participation of a number of countries and look forward to continuing with this work in Geneva in January.

Chair,

The deliberate creation of space debris is an irresponsible act that puts both access to space and objects in space at risk. Such testing may also be perceived as a threat that could result in heightened tensions, creating an environment of mistrust. For that reason, New Zealand is pleased to cosponsor the resolution on destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing.

In July this year, New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that New Zealand would not engage in such testing. New Zealand does not have the capability and nor are we seeking to acquire it. It is squarely in our interests as a launch state to safeguard access to space. But it is also squarely in our collective interests, whether States have launch capability or not, to ensure such irresponsible behaviour does not affect the ongoing operation of infrastructure in space on which we all rely in the 21st century.

On that basis, we call on all States to support this resolution. This is not a final step, but rather a small and practical contribution towards the development of a set of rules and norms to ensure the ongoing safety and security of space.

Thank you.