

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly - First Committee

**Statement by Canada – Thematic Statement #3:
Outer Space**

New York, _____ October 2022

[Mister/Madam] Chair,

Space is an integral part of daily life in Canada, and across the world. It connects and informs us, enabling everything from navigation, to cell phone services to financial transactions. While the rapid proliferation of space activities presents significant opportunity for humanity, the viability of all space operations is increasingly vulnerable to both natural and man-made

threats. This challenge is further compounded by the growing number of space actors, and the lack of a more developed regime of international norms that govern space activities. Canada remains committed to engaging with States and stakeholders to maintain a safe, secure, and sustainable outer space environment.

Canada strongly supports United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/36 and connected initiatives, like the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviour. These resolutions are a welcome step towards a new approach to space security, and are important to advance progress on these issues, given the longstanding deadlock that has plagued the Conference on Disarmament.

We remain committed to preventing an arms race in outer space. But the current stalemate is not sustainable, especially given the pace at which space activities continue to increase. It is time for a pragmatic

approach that is verifiable and includes objective descriptions of responsible conduct. We are pleased that the first two sessions of the OEWG have seen substantive engagement by a number of States on these issues, and the growing recognition that norms of responsible behaviour have an important role in promoting space security.

The recent U.S. commitment not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests is a promising example of one such norm of behaviour. Eliminating such tests is important for reducing tensions in space and preventing the creation of debris, which poses a danger to all personnel and spacecraft in operation. Canada joined this commitment at the first session of the OEWG in May, and we are pleased that a number of other States have followed suit. Canada encourages all States to join us in adopting the UNGA resolution on destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing to foster a global norm that enhances space security.

There remains an ongoing debate between States on the merits of a behaviours-based approach, and the clear preference by some for legally binding instruments. These approaches need not be contradictory. Pragmatic, broadly adopted norms of responsible behaviour could become legally binding international law in the future. We must continue to move forward with practical, near-term steps that promote trust, transparency and confidence amongst States until we can codify norms of behaviour into law. This will reduce the potential for misunderstandings and miscalculations, and prevent hostilities in, from, and through space.

[Monsieur/Madame le/la Président(e),

Une approche fondée sur les comportements permet également de s'attaquer au large éventail de comportements irresponsables qui entraînent des malentendus et affaiblissent la sécurité spatiale pour tous. Il existe aussi des comportements responsables qui favorisent la confiance, permettent une meilleure

compréhension et renforcent la sécurité spatiale.

Encourager les comportements responsables conformes international existant est la meilleure méthode pour maintenir la paix et la sécurité internationales.

Un environnement spatial sûr, sécurisé et durable est dans l'intérêt de l'ensemble de l'humanité et les avantages importants que nous tirons de l'espace. Le Canada se réjouit de l'engagement continu avec tous les États pour atteindre ces objectifs communs.

Je vous remercie.