



**STATEMENT BY
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ON BEHALF OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

THEMATIC CLUSTER DISCUSSION ON
OUTER SPACE (DISARMAMENT ASPECTS)
FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 77TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN).
2. The world has witnessed much change since the dawn of the “Space Age” about six decades ago. The international community has benefitted immensely from enhancements in the telecommunications and financial sectors which have been made possible by space-based technology. At the 55th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on 3 August 2022 in Phnom Penh, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers noted ongoing multilateral discussions on emerging issues involving international peace and security, such as outer space. They reiterated that access to outer space is an inalienable right of all States and that the use of outer space should exclusively be for peaceful purposes only, and for the collective benefit of humanity. All activities in outer space must be conducted in accordance with international law and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space.

3. ASEAN reaffirms that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its weaponization is of vital importance. ASEAN urges all Member States to respect and ensure the full implementation of all related UN instruments and relevant General Assembly resolutions.
4. ASEAN remains seriously concerned over threats to international peace and security posed by the possible weaponization of outer space or the conversion of outer space into a domain for warfare and armed conflict. We reiterate the urgent need for the commencement of substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding and multilaterally verifiable instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), including the prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space and the prohibition of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.
5. As it is incumbent upon all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space remains peaceful, the General Assembly must play a vital role in fostering continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in this field. ASEAN welcomes the establishment of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/231. We note the submission by delegations and institutions that contribute to the OEWG's discussions, including the working paper on the duty of due regard submitted by the Philippines. We also support other activities and initiatives that help deepen understanding on issues pertaining to space security. Within our region, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has made contributions in this connection, by organising Space Security Workshops.
6. ASEAN also recognizes the significant progress made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in promoting international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space.
7. ASEAN further reaffirms the need for a universal, comprehensive, and nondiscriminatory multilateral approach towards the issue of missiles in all its aspects, negotiated multilaterally within the UN. Any initiatives on this subject should take into account security concerns of all states and their inherent right to peaceful uses of space technologies.

8. We maintain our call for continued action in mitigating the effects of space debris through relevant multilateral fora, and we stand ready to engage with all parties in moving this agenda forward.
9. Stressing that activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States, we reiterate our call on all Member States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and the maintenance of international peace and security.
10. Finally, ASEAN encourages the strengthening of capacity-building programmes, with particular emphasis on developing countries, to ensure that outer space is, both in principle and in practice, a common heritage of mankind which all States can avail themselves of.

Thank you.