

**Explanation of Vote (after the vote): Sri Lanka
Cluster 3: Outer Space (disarmament aspects)**

Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka's position on the peaceful uses of outer space and commitment towards the prevention of weaponization of outer space has been clear and consistent. The common heritage of humankind to outer space, moon and other celestial bodies should be preserved at all times, and to this end, it is essential to ensure that its exploration and use for peaceful purposes are in the common interest of all humankind.

It is our firm conviction that the important objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space could effectively be achieved only through the early conclusion of an effective and verifiable multilateral, legally binding agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which would contribute to strengthening of the existing legal framework on safety and security of outer space and through prohibition of placement of weapons in outer space and prohibition of threat or use of force against outer space objects.

In this context, Sri Lanka has been presenting the resolution on the 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space' (PAROS) with Egypt annually, this year tabled as L.3 and we thank all delegations for adopting it without a vote. We remain fully committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and will support any initiative to achieve this goal. It is in line with this same trend of logic that Sri Lanka voted in favour of L.70 'Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space' and its operative paragraphs 8 to 12.

Placement of weapons in outer space will only weaken the already fragile international peace and security, and jeopardize the stability of States that possess space capabilities as well as those who do not possess such technology. Therefore, we are pleased to have co-sponsored the resolution L.67 on 'No first placement of weapons in Outer Space.'

Sri Lanka maintains its position in favour of L. 27 – Prevention of an arms race in outer space: reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, in line with its principled position of supporting all multilateral initiatives aimed at promotion of peaceful use of outer space and on the importance of increased coordination and understanding among spacefaring nations. Sri Lanka's vote in support of this resolution is based on the understanding:

- (i) That the continuation of the OEWG on norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours is a stepping stone towards the negotiation and development of a comprehensive legally binding treaty on prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- (ii) While we recognize the value and usefulness of voluntary commitments and enhanced TCMBS on peace and security of outer space, such non-binding norms, rules and principles are only complementary in nature and cannot be a substitute for a comprehensive legally binding multilateral treaty in this regard;
- (iii) We also underscore the importance of reaffirmation of compliance with the obligations under the existing space law regime, particularly by the spacefaring nations, and to ensure that the development of any new norms and principles on space behavior are built on the existing legal framework.

Sri Lanka also abstained on the resolution L.62 – Destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing as this text contains several limitations such as focusing only on 'testing' of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles (DA-ASAT), which activity has the potential for the proliferation of other connected activities in space. The resolution does not refer to production, research & development and their use, as well as having a limited focus only on direct ascent ASATs which are not in line with the objective of guaranteeing the safe and peaceful uses of outer space. We are of the view that the text lacks sufficient transparency with regard to the ultimate objective to be achieved

and is not comprehensive enough, to assure that outer space will not be weaponized.

The impending threat of space warfare once again calls for an international regime that regulates and mitigates threats and perhaps eliminate such threats completely.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.