



ITALY

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 71st UN General Assembly
Thematic Discussion on Outer Space
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Mr. Chair,

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

In the last few decades, Italy has been at the forefront of outer space activities.

Since the launch of our first artificial satellite in outer space, in 1954, we have developed our space capabilities in several areas, such as science, telecommunication, and Earth observation. We have also contributed to the development of the International Space Station.

Space-based applications offer unique resources to all of us today, in the domains of economic growth and innovation, as well as in facing critical issues such as climate change and natural disaster management.

Because of such increasing reliance on space resources, infrastructures, and activities, it becomes imperative to prevent and mitigate the risks associated with lack of traffic management, creation of debris, harmful interferences, miscalculation, and mistrust.

International cooperation is essential in this regard. For this reason, Italy is party to more than sixty bilateral agreements with both space-faring and developing countries, and to the majority of international treaties on outer space. We support and actively participate in different regional and international organisations whose work is relevant to the development and peaceful use of outer space. Italy is, indeed, a founder Member

State of the European Space Agency (ESA) and a member of the Committee for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) from its outset.

Mr. Chair,

The sharply increasing number of objects in space is one of the major reasons why a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put into force. States must commit to enhancing the wellbeing of humankind by working together for the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment.

Italy remains convinced that a crucial step towards achieving more safety and security in outer space activities, as well as its sustainability, is the effective implementation by all concerned States of Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs), including those identified by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in its 2013 Report, later endorsed by this august Assembly.

TCBMs, such as the exchange of information relating to States' space policy and activities, risk reduction notifications and expert visits to national space facilities, reduce the risks of misunderstandings and miscommunication. They help build mutual confidence and are complementary to the existing legal international framework.

In the same vein, Italy welcomes the progress recently made on the Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities by the COPUOS Working Group established under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We are now looking forward for a constructive engagement by all delegations with a view of finalising this effort.

Mr. Chair,

Italy remains fully committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which would transform this environment in an area of conflict, inconsistently with the objective of its long-term use for peaceful purposes.

This is why we have been among the main advocates of the EU draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, as a first, non-legally binding step, complementary to other initiatives that could include a comprehensive, effective and verifiable legally binding instrument.

Notwithstanding the slowdown in the negotiations, we continue to believe that a set of globally shared principles of responsible behavior in outer space may be the most appropriate way to respond to a common sense of urgency expressed by the International Community.

Such principles, which could later lead to the elaboration and adoption of an international voluntary Code of Conduct, should serve longer term goals across the full range of space activities: non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space; prevention of the creation of debris; increasing international cooperation in space; preservation of the integrity of space environment for all; equitable access to outer space; increasing transparency in the conduct of space exploration and exploitation activities.

Italy fully supports those goals, and stands ready to give its contribution towards its achievement.

Thank you, Mr. Chair