United Nations Disarmament Commission

Working Group II

5 April 2018

Statement by Darren Hansen, First Secretary, Australian Mission to the United Nations

Topic 1: Implementation of measures contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189*).

Chair

Thanks again for your proposed structuring of our discussions in this working group. It is indeed helpful in preparing for each of the sessions.

In regard to the theme of this session on implementation of measures contained in the GGE report, Annex 1 of Australia’s conference room paper provides in significant detail the steps we have taken across all six categories of the GGE report.

In the interests of time, I will present just a flavour of some of the measures we have taken in several of the categories and might refer to others later in our discussions.

In the first of the report’s categories -

(a) General transparency and confidence-building measures aimed at enhancing the availability of information on the space policy of States involved in outer space activities
Australia implements this transparency measure by publishing an annual State of Space Report, which is a summary of civilian space-related activities conducted by Commonwealth Government agencies represented on the Australian Government Space Coordination Committee (SCC) and outlines Australia’s Defence Space Policy in the 2016 Defence White Paper.

In the second of the report’s categories –

(b) Information exchange about development programmes for new space systems, as well as information about operational space-based systems providing widely used services such as meteorological observations or global positioning, navigation and timing

The Australian Government funds research and development of space systems through competitive public funding mechanisms. This activity includes space debris tracking and monitoring technologies (both active and passive) for the verification of TCBMs. Information exchange within Government is facilitated by the Australian Government through the civil space area of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Australia and New Zealand are collaborating on a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) trial for positioning applications in both countries. SBAS utilises both space-based and ground-based infrastructure to improve the accuracy, integrity and availability of basic global navigation satellite system signals. Testing will validate applications in sectors such as: agriculture, aviation, construction, mining, rail and, road

In the third of the report’s categories -

(c) The articulation of a State’s principles and goals relating to their exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes

Australia’s Satellite Utilisation Policy includes among its guiding principles a commitment to support rules-based international access to the space environment; promoting peaceful, safe and responsible activities in space.

In the fourth of the report’s categories, namely -

(d) Specific information-exchange measures aimed at expanding the availability of information on objects in outer space and their general function, particularly those objects in Earth orbits

Under its Space Activities Act Australia requires applicants for overseas space launch certificates to include information consistent with the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space
(Registration Convention), and Australia registers space objects as appropriate under the convention.

I will skip over the fifth category for now and move to the sixth –

(f) International cooperation measures in outer space activities, including measures aimed at promoting capacity-building and disseminating data for sustainable economic and social development, that are consistent with existing international commitments and obligations

- Australia’s Geoscience Agency is working in fora such as the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN- GGIM-AP) Regional Committee and the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council (PGSC) to build capacity and expertise in satellite positioning and geodetic infrastructure through regular regional workshops and training programme

Chair

This offers just a flavour of some of the TCBMs that Australia is engaged in and illustrates how we actively release information publicly on our space activities; and cooperate with partners and regional groups to promote the peaceful, safe and responsible use of space. For more detail, I would like to again refer you to the Annex of our Conference Room paper.

We think that some of these measures could be usefully included in the draft paper that you will develop toward the end of this year’s session.

Thank you.