



National Statement

Thematic Discussion on Outer Space 74th UN General Assembly First Committee

Delivered by Ambassador Peter A. Beerwerth

Permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament

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Mr. Chair,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement by the EU on the Thematic Discussion on Outer Space at the 74th Session of the First Committee at the United Nations General Assembly.

1. Germany continues to promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space. We recognize space as a common good to be used for the benefit, and in the interest, of all humankind. Space based services and applications have become an essential driver for socio-economic, scientific and technological development, and serve to achieve the UN sustainable development goals.
2. As the benefits of space activities expand in number and improve in quality, it becomes increasingly important to preserve free access and use of outer space for all States and to ensure its long-term sustainable use.

3. Germany remains concerned about the increasing development of various counter space capabilities, and remains strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Preventing an arms race in outer space and preventing conflicts from extending to outer space are essential for the strengthening of international security and stability and for safeguarding access to and the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes.
4. The significance of space for peace, stability and security is continuously growing. Against this background, the current normative framework for outer space is not sufficient. Germany is open to initiatives aimed at bringing about the substantial advancement of arms control policy with regard to threats to space systems. We continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures and the need to advocate responsible behaviour in outer space notably in the framework of the United Nations, including inter alia on the prevention of the continued proliferation of space debris.
5. For Germany the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and other international applicable space law as developed in the UN framework remain the cornerstone of the global governance of outer space.
6. The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS) plays the central role in the development of treaties, principles and guidelines related to outer space activities. Germany is committed to strengthening international space law and developing appropriate norms for the sustainable use of outer space. In this context, we particularly welcome the adoption by UNCOPUOS of guidelines on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We look forward to their implementation and the further work on the issue under the new working group.

7. Germany actively contributed to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (GGE PAROS). It was unfortunate that the GGE could not reach consensus on a final report despite its cooperative and constructive approach, which led to some interesting proposals as to how to overcome existing deadlocks. Germany is fully supportive of a resumption of the substantive work of the Geneva Disarmament Conference and continues to actively contribute to the discussions and negotiations within the “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” working group (PAROS).
8. We would like to emphasize that a future framework for arms control in relation to outer space should involve comprehensive, effective and verifiable legally binding instruments designed to eventually cover all relevant threats, which are earth-to-space, space-to-space, and space-to-earth.
9. The current draft Treaty presented by the Russian Federation and China on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT) does not constitute a sufficient basis in this regard. How do both initiators of the draft treaty intend to reconcile their approach with the fact that they already possess and are developing further capabilities, including ground-based anti-satellite capabilities, which are not explicitly included in the scope of the draft treaty but nevertheless cause significant and serious threats to space systems and the space environment? We would like to encourage both initiators of the draft treaty to facilitate a relaunch of the arms control efforts with regard to all relevant threats to space systems arising from irresponsible behavior in outer space.

10. Notwithstanding the goal of a comprehensive and legally binding framework in the future which complements the Outer Space Treaty, the incremental process thereto would in our view clearly benefit from strengthening spacefaring nations' due regard to the corresponding interests of all other spacefaring nations, in particular through transparency and confidence building measures, and consensus-building regarding responsible behaviour in outer space.
11. Given our common interests in space, Germany, together with other space-faring nations, both in the EU and UN context, engages actively in the various UN processes in Geneva, New York and Vienna. It is our responsibility to safeguard the continued peaceful and sustainable use of outer space for current and future generations.