Unofficial translation

Statement
by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation
Ambassador Gennady Gatilov
at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament

(Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space)

(Geneva, 20 August 2026)

Dear Mr. President,

First of all, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). You may fully count on the support of the Russian delegation.

We are grateful to you for convening the meeting on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). This topic is one of the key items on the agenda of the Conference and a priority for the Russian Federation.

Against the backdrop of the overall degradation of the international political situation, the state of affairs in the area of military space security continues to deteriorate. The risks of outer space turning into an arena of armed confrontation have ceased to be hypothetical. Some Western countries and blocs, in their space policy documents, directly refer to near-Earth space as "another operational domain" where combat operations may be conducted. Some of them, guided by the objective of global dominance, have already embarked on the implementation of large-scale programs to develop weapons systems intended for use in, from or against outer space.

Thus, the project of the United States on creating a national multi-layer missile defense system "Golden Dome" implies the development and deployment of space-based interceptors, the placement of systems for tracking ballistic missiles and hypersonic weapons in space, as well as means that would make it possible to intercept missile attacks prior to their launch as well as during the boost phase. In fact, this means the creation of a powerful force potential in near-Earth orbits, which,

despite the declared defensive nature of the program, includes strike offensive capabilities.

A serious threat to space security is active use of satellite systems and the related ground infrastructure, declared as civilian, in supporting combat operations and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

Such a development may lead to further destabilization of the international situation and the creation of new dividing lines, provoke other States to take compensatory measures and, ultimately, unleash an arms race in outer space. Its consequences would be destructive for all of humanity.

We consider it a priority task of the international community to prevent such a scenario. We are convinced that the point of no return has not yet been passed and that through the joint efforts of all States it is possible to elaborate solutions that would prevent an arms race in space and preserve outer space as an area for peaceful cooperation.

Mr. President,

The Russian Federation is convinced that the most effective way to achieve the objective of PAROS is the elaboration and conclusion of a multilateral legally binding instrument (LBI) that would envisage a ban on placement of weapons in space, use and threat of use of force against objects in space or by means of them. I would underline that non-binding measures may also play an important role, but only as a complementary means. They cannot replace efforts towards elaborating an LBI.

Among the fundamental legal obligations that, in our view, States should assume, we consider the following to be of priority:

- not to use outer space objects as a means to destroy any targets on Earth, in airspace or outer space;

- not to create, test or place weapons in outer space for any purposes, including for anti-missile defense, as anti-satellite means, to destroy the targets on Earth or in the air, as well as to dismantle such systems that are already at the States' disposal;

- not to develop, test, deploy or use outer space weapons that are specifically designed for anti-missile defense, as anti-satellite means, for the purposes of destroying targets on Earth or in the air, dismantle such systems that are already at the States' disposal;

- not to destroy, damage, disrupt the normal functioning or alter the trajectory of outer space objects that belong to other States, without their consent;

This list of potential elements of a future LBI on PAROS is neither exhaustive nor final. Specific wording and set of obligations should be the outcome of a negotiating process that is long overdue. The assumption by States of relevant obligations could prevent an uncontrolled arms race in space. This would significantly strengthen international security and stability, ensure the predictability of space activities, enhance confidence among countries and create conditions for fruitful cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

We consider the CD, which is the single multilateral forum for negotiations on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, to be the venue where the elaboration of an LBI on PAROS should take place. We advocate the earliest possible search for solutions that would make it possible to overcome the many years of deadlock in the work of the CD, agree on a comprehensive and balanced Program of Work of the forum in accordance with its mandate, and begin a substantive discussion on the elaboration of an LBI on PAROS, thereby launching the relevant negotiating efforts.

In this endeavor we will not have to start from scratch, as there already exist serious developments that constitute a good basis for a future LBI. This refers to the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT), submitted by Russia and China to the CD in 2008 and updated in 2014 taking into account the views of Member States, as well as the consensus final report of the relevant Group of Governmental Experts adopted in 2024.

We note the work being carried out in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on PAROS, in which the Russian delegation takes an

active and meaningful part. We hope that the outcomes of the OEWG will be useful for future negotiating work at the CD.

Mr. President,

In addition, we would like to draw attention to the international initiative/political commitment on the No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (NFP). It is unprecedented in its significance as a transparency and confidence-building measure and constitutes a practical instrument for keeping space free of weapons of any type. Like other non-binding measures, this initiative is not a substitute for an LBI, but a significant step towards its elaboration. 37 UN Member States have already become its full-fledged participants. If all countries, especially those that are space-faring, join it, the situation with regard to the space will become more predictable and there will be well-founded confidence that space will remain free of strike systems. We call upon all States to join the NFP initiative.

Now, a few words regarding the concept of "responsible behaviour" in outer space being promoted by a number of countries. In our view, it has a number of fundamental imbalances and shortcomings. The norms and rules of "responsible behaviour" are not a generally recognized category of international law. They are subjective. There is no clear definition of who, and on the basis of what criteria, will decide whether the behavior of a participant in space activities is "responsible" or not. Under such circumstances, the implementation of this concept cannot contribute to solving the task of PAROS, but will only lead to an escalation of tensions in space. This idea is intended to divert the attention of UN Member States from the objectives of PAROS to secondary and non-core topics and to consolidate rules for regulation of space activities that are advantageous to one group of countries to the detriment of interests other States.

Mr. President,

We would also like to take this opportunity to inform that the Russian Federation intends to submit draft resolutions for consideration by the First Committee of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly that have a direct bearing on the topic of PAROS: "Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of

an Arms Race in Outer Space", "Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities" and "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space". We count on the highest possible level of support for our drafts.

Mr. President,

Despite the difficult state of affairs in the military space sphere and the obvious differences among States as to how to achieve the objective of PAROS, Russia is convinced that, through joint efforts, we can prevent negative and destructive scenarios. In order to achieve results, all participants in the process need to demonstrate a professional approach, set aside confrontational thinking and respect the legitimate security interests of other countries. We are convinced that it is within our power to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in space that would be turbulent for the entire world.

Thank you for your attention.