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Statement by Canada – Thematic Debate: Outer Space

New York, October 2025

Canada



Chair,

Outer space is indispensable to modern society. It enables critical services that drive economic growth and support progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, in the context of rising geopolitical tensions, vital space systems face increasing threats—from both on-orbit and ground-based capabilities—that can interfere with their operations. As space activity continues to expand rapidly, efforts to promote space security are becoming ever more urgent.

Canada welcomed the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. We were disappointed that the first week of substantive discussions was delayed due to procedural issues. This forum is essential for all States to share views on space security. Canada also strongly supports the active participation of civil society and believes the OEWG's work will be strengthened by including a diversity of perspectives, particularly from technical experts and commercial industry.

Chair,

The OEWG has a clear mandate to consider both legally binding and non-legally binding measures to enhance space security. As Canada has previously emphasized, these approaches are not mutually exclusive. Reaching agreement on a treaty is challenging even in stable strategic environments; in times of mistrust, it becomes exponentially more difficult. Norms can serve as incremental steps to build trust and lay the groundwork for future legally binding instruments.

This was the very path that led to the Outer Space Treaty. Norms relevant to outer space activities were first developed and reflected in UN General Assembly resolutions in 1961, 1962, and 1963. These norms gained widespread acceptance and practice, ultimately leading to their codification in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty—a treaty that remains relevant 58 years later.

Furthermore, norms can enhance the predictability and transparency of space operations, reducing the risk of misperceptions that could lead to escalation or conflict. Such norms can take the form of political commitments, such as the commitment not to conduct direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests, which Canada supports as meaningful unilateral measures that contribute to space security.

Chair,

Canada has a long and proud history as a spacefaring nation. We fully recognize the importance of a secure outer space environment and remain committed to working with



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international partners to ensure that space remains safe, secure, and sustainable—for the benefit of all.

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