

**National contribution of the Russian Federation
for a report of the Secretary-General in accordance
with the UNGA Resolution 77/251
"Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities"**

In accordance with paragraph 11 of UNGA resolution 77/251 adopted on December 30, 2022, the Russian Federation has the honour to submit its national contribution to the UN Secretary-General's Report to the UNGA 78th session on the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (TCBMs) contained in the 2013 report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities.

The Russian Federation assumes that transparency and confidence-building measures in any field contribute to ensuring peace and stability at all levels, help eliminate possible threats and challenges to security, help prevent military confrontation and facilitate the settlement of situations that could lead to a rise of international tension. They make an important contribution to improving interstate relations, enhancing dialogue and cooperation between countries.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities have equivalent goals. They contribute to preventing the transformation of outer space into an arena of hostilities and confrontation; an arms race in outer space (PAROS); ensuring predictability in outer space, safety of outer space activities. The specific considerations of the Russian Federation regarding TCBMs related to military activities are contained in the UN Secretary-General's Report "Measures to ensure transparency and confidence-building in outer space activities" (A/65/123), as well as in the 2013 report of the GGE on TCBMs.¹

¹ UN Doc. A/68/189 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space.

TCBMs can be classified as those related and not related to military activities.² TCBMs related to military activities are called upon to promote control over compliance with agreements in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.³ In particular, they can be used for developing a multilateral legally binding PAROS instrument with safeguards against the placement of weapons in outer space, threat or use of force against or using outer space objects.

TCBMs related to military activities should be aimed at implementing PAROS goals and could be used as a temporary verification mechanism for the aforementioned future agreement. At the same time, transparency and confidence-building measures originally intended to monitor compliance with the provisions of a legally binding instrument, cannot be effective and fully implemented separately from it. Their implementation depends directly on progress in the development of such an agreement on PAROS.

Some of the TCBMs proposed by the Russian Federation can be implemented independently. Such measures are aimed at creating a favourable international environment leading to the conclusion of a legally binding instrument and, ultimately, achievement of PAROS goals. In particular, the internationally recognized initiative/political commitment put forward by the Russian Federation on No first placement of weapons in outer space (NFP) has become the most effective TCBM currently in force. To date, 32 UN Member States have become its full-fledged participants.

Over recent years, the NFP political commitment has become a significant political factor contributing to strengthening international peace, ensuring equal and indivisible security for all, as well as increasing predictability and sustainability of states' activities in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. If all states, primarily space faring nations, assume the NFP commitment, the situation with the non-deployment of weapons in outer space would become

² Guiding principles for appropriate types of confidence building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level. UNGA Official Records, Fifteenth Special Session Supplement No. 3 (A/S-15/3), pp. 20-32.

³ Guiding principles for appropriate types of confidence building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level, para. 2.2.7.

more predictable; there would be reasonable confidence that space remain free of strike systems in the foreseeable future and a favourable environment would be developed for meaningful negotiations to conclude the relevant agreement.

The NFP takes into account the needs of developing countries in outer space exploration. Joining the initiative does not require any financial or technological resources, the appropriate decision is subject only to the political will.

A shift in the focus and goal setting of certain related to military activities TCBMs has become recently an alarming trend. For example, as part of a measure "Exchanges of information on the principles and goals of a state's outer space policy"⁴, a number of countries (France, Japan, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, United States of America) and regional organizations (EU, NATO) have approved and made public documents in the field of defense space policy in which they: designated near-Earth space as "one more (a new) operational environment" in which hostilities can be conducted; identified Russia and China as their main "competitors"/"adversaries" in outer space that should be "deterred"⁵; specified measures to "deter" Russia and China; justified the "need" for the space forces and specific "deterrence" capabilities.

Moreover, the US doctrinal documents set the goal of ensuring "dominance, military superiority up to total supremacy in outer space". Washington and its allies are pursuing a policy of placing weapons in outer space, building up force capabilities (both kinetic and non-kinetic) with regard to outer space objects, and using outer space for warfare. Extensive programs are underway to develop weapon systems designed to threat or use force in, from, or against outer space.

The implementation of space military plans by the US and its allies has the most negative impact on the entire existing system of security of outer space activities, which resulted from the development of international space law and is based on the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

⁴ UN Document A/68/189, "Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities", p. 16.

⁵ The NATO-Russia Glossary of Political and Military Terms defines the term "deterrence" as "intimidation".

The destructive approaches contained in the doctrinal documents of the US and its allies, as well as their activities aimed at implementing such aggressive attitudes, have already de facto turned these TCBMs (including those contained as recommendations in the UN Secretary-General's Report "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/65/123) and in the 2013 GGE report on TCBMs) from a tool of trust into a tool of "deterrence". Such substantial negative changes in approaches to TCBMs cannot be ignored when assessing the effectiveness and prospects of their implementation in general.

The overall international security context and all factors affecting strategic stability should also be taken into account with regard to the future of TCBMs. The aggressive and provocative anti-Russian course taken by Western states in recent years has led to a drastic decrease in the level of trust between space-faring nations, which obviously complicates the implementation of already developed transparency and confidence-building measures that have voluntary nature. At the same time, given the international security crisis and trust deficit, the role of existing legally binding instruments and the demand for new arrangements of this kind are increasing.

In this regard, we consider TCBMs to be purely interim, subsidiary and temporary measures while a legally binding agreement is being developed in order to implement purpose of PAROS. Such measures should be aimed primarily at contributing to complete PAROS goals. We reiterate that TCBMs cannot substitute a legally binding agreements and have only temporary and subsidiary nature as they particularly serve as an element of the verification mechanism in such instruments. This role of TCBMs is reaffirmed in the 2013 GGE report on TCBMs and in the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) Guidelines for Appropriate Types of Confidence-Building Measures and for the Implementation of Such Measures on a Global or Regional Level.⁶

PAROS is an essential condition and means of preserving outer space for peaceful use. Russia reaffirms its position of principal that: without solid guarantees

⁶ Elaborated in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 39/63E of 12 December 1984.

of preserving outer space free from weapons, enshrined in an international legally binding document, solving the issues related to peaceful use of outer space, and ensuring safety of outer space activities is a dead-end road.

Further, TCBMs not related to military activities are aimed at enhancing the safety and sustainability of day-to-day space operations,⁷ establishing conditions of predictability of the situation in the near-Earth space, and protecting space assets.⁸

The Russian Federation is already integrating on a voluntary basis certain TCBMs into its national practice in the form of technical and administrative decisions as well as legal regulation provisions. In particular, we

- inform annually Member States of the UN Committee on Outer Space (COPUOS) on the results in Russia's space activities, including those related to participation of our country in the International Space Station program;

- communicate consistently to the Committee the principles and aims of the national outer space policy, facilitate the development of international cooperation with a view to maintaining the long-term sustainability of space activity and preserving the space environment for future generations;

- use actively the COPUOS and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as a platform to discuss with interested partners the new challenges and threats to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, related, first of all, to the deployment in the low orbit of the so-called mega-constellations of small civilian communication and Earth's remote probing space vehicles, including their use for undeclared purposes;

- promote gradually within the COPUOS an initiative to create, under the UN aegis, a centre for information exchange on outer space objects and events;

- inform as specified by the UN Registration Convention and on a regular basis the UN Secretary-General about launching into orbit and deorbiting Russian outer space objects;

⁷ UN document A/68/189 "Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities", p. 13, para. 25.

⁸ Report of the UN Secretary-General "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/65/123), p. 45.

- provide information concerning Russian outer space objects upon request from States and relevant international organizations for the purposes of safety of space operations;
- facilitate the visiting arrangements for foreign specialists of Russian space infrastructure facilities, rocket and space equipment demonstrations and exchange of experience;
- notify regularly our partners on launches of Russian space launch vehicles of various classes under the Hague Code of Conduct.

Therefore, the Russian Federation finds it possible to continue the implementation of TCBMs related to military activities purely in connection with the elaboration of a multilateral legally binding instrument on PAROS which would enshrine the ban on placing weapons in outer space, threat or use of force against or using outer space objects. Only such conjugation of these two instruments can ensure the TCBMs implementation in accordance with the principle of equal and indivisible security for all without prejudice to the defence capabilities of Member States and strategic stability in general. The efficiency of implementation of TCBMs not related to military activities will depend, in its turn, on harmonization of specific principles of their implementation within the UN Committee on Outer Space.

The Russian Federation would ask you, Mr. Secretary-General, to take into account all the above presented considerations in your substantive Report pursuant to para 11 of UN GA resolution 77/251 of 30 December 2022 and to include the present document in the annex to your Report.