



Switzerland's view on the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities of 2013, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/251

Introduction

The present submission provides Switzerland's view on the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities of 2013 as requested by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/251. Switzerland welcomes the comprehensive work put forward by the Group of Governmental Experts. It notes that if some measures identified by the Group have been taken forward (notably in the context of COPUOS's work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities), but many remain to be implemented.

With the growing civilian and military dependency on and the resulting competition in outer space, States are faced with increasing safety, sustainability and security challenges in outer space as well as on earth. A key starting point in keeping outer space peaceful and safe is to strengthen the adherence to, implementation and universalization of existing obligations under international law. Moreover, Switzerland sees great value in leveraging existing conventions, instruments and regimes such as the Outer Space Treaty, the UN Register on Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Radio Regulations and ITU Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation to reinforce space safety, sustainability and security. In addition, Switzerland also deems non-legally binding instruments, such as guidelines and transparency and confidence-building measures, to be important complements able to contribute to the safety, sustainability and security of outer space activities to the benefit of all by fostering coordinated and responsible behavior as well as preventing misunderstandings and unintended escalation, reducing ambiguity and enhancing confidence and trust between States.

In this context, Switzerland welcomes efforts to take forward the recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts (A/68/189). It welcomes the inclusion of this topic on the (provisional) agenda of the UN Disarmament Commission. It notes with interest that this matter is also being addressed by the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behavior. Switzerland welcomes the [non-paper](#) on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour relating to threats by States to space systems submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of the Philippines to this process and supports the transparency and confidence-building measures contained therein.

Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space

Information exchange between States is of great importance to enhance transparency in outer space activities and foster trust. All space-faring nations should publish their national space policies and strategies and other documents relating to space security. Switzerland would see value in those documents being transmitted to and made available by a central depository maintained by the UN Secretary General. For its part, Switzerland has taken steps to this effect and published its 2008 space policy, and is planning to adopt a similar approach with regard to the upcoming update of the Swiss space policy. In the same vein, Switzerland welcomes the establishment of UNDIR's Space Security Portal, is planning to contribute to it, and encourages all States to submit all possible pertinent information thereto. Switzerland is also in favor of information sharing on military expenditures as provided for in UN General Assembly



Resolution 66/20 also covering major military outer space expenditures and space activities relating to national security.

Switzerland sees great value in the establishment and maintenance of permanent lines of communication and notification networks and mechanisms between States with regard to outer space activities. This could for instance include the sharing of information on space activities or the undertaking of international consultations, as foreseen under Art. IX or Art. XI of the Outer Space Treaty, as it could enhance transparency and confidence-building among States and prevent misperceptions. Switzerland supports the registration of space objects pursuant to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space of 1974 and welcomes the pre-launch notification mechanism and the sharing of Space Launch Vehicle policies provided for by the Den Haag Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation. Switzerland would see value in establishing a mechanism for sharing notifications of orbital or other maneuvers in outer space that could be perceived as threatening. Further, Switzerland supports the exchange of data and sharing of open access space objects or space situational awareness (SSA) catalogs to allow for the uniform identification of activities that do not comply with the principles of responsible behavior.

Furthermore, to avoid and prevent incidents resulting from scheduled manoeuvres, uncontrolled re-entry events or man-made threats to flight safety or space objects, Switzerland encourages States to engage in improving SSA capabilities, information sharing and the notification of all States that may be impacted by such occurrences and welcomes risk reduction measures and notifications to secure the safety of outer space. The United Nations Guidelines on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, especially those related to the safety of space operations, could provide guidance in this respect. Switzerland encourages States to engage in voluntary visits to space launch sites and facilities.

Furthermore, in line with article I of the Outer Space Treaty, Switzerland is of the view that international cooperation on scientific and technical projects between space-faring and non-space-faring States should ensure that the exploration and use of outer space is to the benefit for all. Regular bilateral and multilateral diplomatic exchanges and consultations provide an important opportunity to prevent misunderstandings and foster mutual trust. This also includes political and diplomatic outreach measures. In this respect, Switzerland welcomes the continuation of the regular joint meetings held between the First and Fourth Committees of the United Nations General Assembly on space security and sustainability. In view of the growing importance of the private sector in the space domain, Switzerland would welcome the establishment of a consultative mechanism that brings together States and non-States actors.