



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the  
United Nations Office and other international organizations

---

---

**Statement by Mr. Nasserddin Heidari**  
**Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran**  
**before**  
**The Third Session of the OEWG on reducing Space Threats**  
**through Norms, Rules and Principles of responsible Behaviours**  
**Geneva, 30 January-3 February 2023**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Thank you Mr. Chair,**

At the outset of discussion on Topic one, we welcome you back to the chair of this OEWG, we wish you all the success in your endeavors to take us to a consensual result. We also thank the Secretariat for preparation of this this OEWG Session.

**Mr. Chair,**

Suffice to repeat that, more than four decades after the Conference on Disarmament was mandated to negotiate a legally binding instrument for preventing an arms race in outer space that goal is still as elusive as before and international community is yet facing security challenges and threats that are originating from ever increasing weaponization and militarization of outer space. More states are involved in space activities, and some private actors are also involved in space launch activities and space applications.

Due to the increasing number of stakeholders in the use of outer space, and the growing dependence of human life on the benefits of the outer space products and services for economic development, maintaining stable space peace and security in outer space, becomes more essential. The rapid growing trend of development of space technologies, the incremental rising of conflicts in outer space, and the activities

of some governments to dominate and seek superiority over space, has revealed the inadequacy of existing international legal instruments in the face of new challenges to maintain the security of outer space and promote its peaceful use and exploration.

**Mr. Chair,**

The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its well-known position that outer space is the common province of all humankind, and the use and exploration of which must be for the benefit of all nations and should remain the domain of peace and international cooperation for peaceful purposes. In this connection, we re-emphasize the principle envisaged in space Law as universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development, the non- appropriation of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies by claim of sovereignty, use, occupation or any other means, responsibility of states for their national space activities carried out by both governmental and non-governmental entities; the non- militarization of outer space, the strict use of outer space, as common heritage of humankind for peaceful purposes; and international cooperation in the development of space activities, in particular those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of all States, taking into account the needs of Developing Countries. Of Course the 5 core treaties of Space law and the core principles of peaceful use of outer space are adequate enough to guarantee peaceful use and exploration of outer space if they are completed by prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Therefore it is more compelling today than before that the prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space known as PAROS remains as high priority security agenda for international community to negotiate a legally binding instrument in the Conference on Disarmament and not letting this long awaited mandate of the CD to be converted to a fundamentally political agenda of some states intending to subject this high valuable agenda of the CD to make distinction between responsible and irresponsible behaviors in outer space.

**Mr. Chair,**

The impact of the departure and deviation from the long lasting mandate of CD on PAROS to negotiate a legally binding instrument for the full, effective and non-discriminatory prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, as complementary to space law, is ultimately dangerous and politically divisive. That is why we are insisting on this argument in this OEWG. We are not convinced that the concept of responsible behavior is solution for the challenging issue of PAROS driven by political expectations, since it is subjective, vague and extracted from social science literature to define norm setting as standard of appropriate behavior for political act instead of legal undertaking. Due to the fact that norms are usually being set based on expectations instead of law, they are easier to be adapted to a political situation or situations of a particular state or states who are adamantly against the pursuit of legal agreements to keep their flexibility for example in case of outer space to follow their national superiority in outer space.

The outer space is not the sole case in this regard. Principally characterization of behaviors through norms instead of legal agreements inherently and as past experiences has shown, would become a tool for some countries to evade their own responsibility and put the blame on others. As we said before, it creates ideological bias, double standard, political division, technical barriers, and abusive unilateral restrictions and coercive measures, as pretext to hamper the peaceful use of outer space. We are of the firm view that, the OEWG should create condition for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on outer space so as to prevent an arms race in outer space by identifying the root causes of threats to peaceful use of outer space.

**Mr. Chair,**

Along with the Group of 21 of the Conference on Disarmament and the Non-Aligned Movement, we have supported the draft treaty on PAROS known as PPWT presented by two delegations as a basis for the establishment of an ad hoc committee

to negotiate a legally binding treaty in CD. We have also actively participated in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on PAROS, established in 2017 and in its meetings held in 2018 and 2019.

The GGE conducted an in-depth and substantive discussion on the elements of relevant international legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. Unfortunately, a certain state has stood against consensus in the GGE and not let the report of the group follow suit in the UN. Such State, while unwilling to subject the development of its military capabilities in outer space to any legal undertakings, has also rejected the negotiations of a legal treaty for PAROS and has stalled single handedly against any movement in UN disarmament machinery in this regard. Furthermore, some states, under the guise of collective defense, have defined space as an "arena of military operations" and have increased military investments for space and overtly and covertly are developing space warfare systems and military alliances at a high speed. The creation of a space force and the formation of military alliances to prepare for military actions in space, are clear manifestations of the growing dangers and threats of an arms race in outer space.

**Mr. Chair,**

In recent years, a certain state as being the first country to test anti-satellite weapons and creating more space debris than any other countries has increased its plans and actions to achieve military and strategic superiority to gain control of space. In a hypocritical and misleading move, this country talks about banning the testing of anti-satellite missiles, which is accompanied by the support of allies. Furthermore, with the integration of commercial-military space systems, security-legal challenges are expanding and as a result, hostile actions against other countries are growing. As an example we should refer to the illegal operation of the broadband satellite Internet service known as Starlink within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran by a mega-constellation operator (SPACEX) with the US government support. Starlink receivers have begun to be smuggled into Iran, in hopes of providing a backup Internet.

Based on the Treaty on “Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies” envisaged in its Article VI: “States Parties to the Treaty shall bear international responsibility for national activities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies or by non-governmental entities, and for assuring that national activities are carried out in conformity with the provisions set forth in the present Treaty. The activities of non-governmental entities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall require authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate State Party to the Treaty.”

In spite of our government’s formal objection addressed to UNOOSA, ITU, United Nation Security Council via formal Verbal-Note, as well as Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and Constellation Company which provides satellite internet, no response was received. The “Regulation Governing Landing Rights regarding Provisions of Satellite Services in the Islamic Republic of Iran is also formally submitted to US Government, FCC and SpaceX Corporation in a Note-Verbal on 25th October 2022 through the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran, serving as Protecting Power of the USA in Iran.

Furthermore, “Regulation Governing Landing Rights Regarding Provisions of Satellite Services in the Islamic Republic of Iran” which is available on the website of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and operators were formally informed of any communication satellite constellation providing broadband Internet, must respect local landing rights as countries have sovereignty claims over spectrum allocation related to broadcast in their territory.

Such irresponsible illegal act is not only considered as intervening in the internal affairs of Iran in accordance with Article 2, Para 7 of the UN Charter, which has to be observed by all UN Member States, but also is flagrant violation of the international law, in particular the inviolability of the “sovereign equality” of all UN members in accordance to the UN Charter. Consequently, the Islamic Republic of

Iran holds the US government responsible for such unlawful and irresponsible operation by its SpaceX Corporation as private company.

**Mr. Chair,**

It is not secret that, Starlik is not merely a civilian project, but also pursues military objectives as an element for militarization and invigoration of an arms race in outer space to threat national security of States. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its inherent right to respond, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations to any threat posed, or wrongful act against its national sovereignty and its territorial integrity. The conduct and action of constellation companies in Iran's territory without authorization is a blatant breach of sovereignty which include refrain from complying with the OST-1967 as well as Iran's Landing Right.

Yesterday the point was made regarding launching a remote sensing satellite by Iran. It should be noted that Iran's indigenous advancement and progress in the field of space capabilities have been built upon our previous assets and capacities, planning for a sustainable utilization of space and getting benefit from space to accomplish on the ground welfare. So launching a remote sensing satellite into Low-earth Orbit is an instance in this regard. This achievement has been obtained while illegal unilateral sanctions were imposed on our Space agencies to seek the cooperation with other states to launch satellites for our country as Iran is prone to natural disasters and as it needs formidable remote sensing to prevent and manage such natural disasters. The illegitimate action in imposing sanctions against our space agencies is in clear contradiction with the principles of international space law, such as free access to outer space and international cooperation in space activities. It should be reminded that this illegitimate action will not prevent Iran's efforts to develop its peaceful space program by using indigenous capacities and taking advantages of international cooperation.

**I thank you Mr. Chair.**