



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 101 (a)

**Prevention of an arms race in outer space: prevention of an arms race in outer space**

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2020

[on the report of the First Committee ([A/75/397](#), para. 15)]

### 75/36. Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the applicability of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, to activities in outer space and the right of all States to explore and use outer space without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with such law,

*Recalling* its resolutions [68/50](#) of 5 December 2013 and [74/32](#) of 12 December 2019,

*Emphasizing* the importance of maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable environment for the benefit of all and the significant contribution of outer space activities to social, economic, scientific and technological development, as well as to international peace and security,

*Reaffirming* the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,<sup>1</sup> and the obligations for States parties to the Treaty to explore and use outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, and to be guided by the principle of cooperation and mutual assistance,

*Welcoming* the recent adoption by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its sixty-second session of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities,<sup>2</sup> the implementation of which may have a positive effect on international peace and security,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* ([A/74/20](#)), annex II.



*Urging* all States, when developing, planning and executing their space activities, to remain committed to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space and to refrain from conducting activities contrary to their obligations under international law, including those that could threaten the ability of all States to freely use and explore outer space, now and in the future,

*Stressing* that the creation of long-lived orbital debris arising from the deliberate destruction of space systems increases the risk of in-orbit collisions and the potential for misunderstanding and miscalculations that could lead to conflict,

*Reaffirming* that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security,

*Recalling* the primary role of the Conference on Disarmament on questions relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, including the weaponization of outer space and threats from capabilities on Earth, and the relevant responsibilities of the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission,

*Noting* the rapid advances of technologies in space systems, the use of which could have positive or negative effects on international security, and seeking to understand how States behave in the light of these developments,

*Recognizing* that efforts to prevent an arms race and to prevent conflict from beginning in or extending into outer space must include consideration of the use of all potential technologies and means, whether on Earth or in outer space,

*Stressing* that uses of these technologies and means for purposes inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, including against signals for operators and users and the terrestrial infrastructure supporting space systems, can lead to the perception of threats and can have destabilizing effects on peace and security on Earth, and that such threats already exist in outer space and on Earth,

*Recognizing* the need for States to seek to avoid and mitigate the potential impact on peace and security arising from accidents, miscommunication or a lack of transparency, which could lead to miscalculations and the escalation of tensions and contribute to an arms race,

*Cognizant* of the challenges of effectively verifying the capabilities of space objects, which can have both civilian and military applications, interpreting their behaviour or determining whether the systems will be used for purposes inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international security and stability, while reaffirming that verification is one of the essential components of all arms control instruments,

*Noting* the need for all States to work together to reduce threats to space systems through the further development and implementation of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours with the aim of maintaining a peaceful, safe, stable, secure and sustainable outer space environment, which might, as appropriate and without prejudice, contribute to further consideration of legally binding instruments in this area,

*Recognizing* the importance of the full involvement and equal participation of women and men in discussions on reducing space threats through responsible behaviours and the need to assess the possible differentiated impacts of such threats,

1. *Affirms* that all States must conduct their activities in the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, in conformity with

international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and urges Member States to take this into account when formulating their space policies;

2. *Encourages* those States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the exploration and use of outer space to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their national law, as well as incorporating them into their national legislation;

3. *Expresses* the desire that all Member States reach a common understanding of how best to act to reduce threats to space systems in order to maintain outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable and sustainable environment, free from an arms race and conflict, for the benefit of all, and consider establishing channels of direct communication for the management of perceptions of threat;

4. *Invites* States members and observers of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission to inform those bodies of their national space security policies, strategies or doctrines, on a voluntary basis, in accordance with and in support of the mandates of those bodies;

5. *Encourages* Member States to study existing and potential threats and security risks to space systems, including those arising from actions, activities or systems in outer space or on Earth, characterize actions and activities that could be considered responsible, irresponsible or threatening and their potential impact on international security, and share their ideas on the further development and implementation of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours and on the reduction of the risks of misunderstanding and miscalculations with respect to outer space;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to seek the views of Member States on the issues referred to in the foregoing paragraph and to submit a substantive report, with an annex containing these views, to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, for further discussion by Member States;

7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-sixth session, under the item entitled “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”, a sub-item entitled, “Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours”.

37th plenary meeting  
7 December 2020