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Agenda item 96

Prevention of an arms race in outer space

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2024

[on the report of the First Committee ([A/79/406](#), para. 20)]

79/18. Weapons of mass destruction in outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [1884 \(XVIII\)](#) of 17 October 1963, [1962 \(XVIII\)](#) of 13 December 1963, [2222 \(XXI\)](#) of 19 December 1966, [62/217](#) of 22 December 2007, [68/50](#) of 5 December 2013, [74/82](#) of 13 December 2019, [77/40](#) and [77/41](#) of 7 December 2022, [77/250](#) of 30 December 2022, [78/19](#), [78/20](#) and [78/21](#) of 4 December 2023 and [78/238](#) of 22 December 2023,

Emphasizing the common interest of all humankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the indispensable role of the relevant entities of the United Nations in these efforts,

Underscoring the importance of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies¹ (the Outer Space Treaty) as the cornerstone of the international legal regime governing outer space activities, containing the fundamental principles of international space law and providing an indispensable framework for the conduct of outer space activities and in preserving a peaceful, secure, safe, stable and sustainable outer space environment,

Recalling that in article I of the Outer Space Treaty it is stated that the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all humankind,²

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 610, No. 8843.

² Article I also provides that “Outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and there shall be free access to all areas of celestial bodies. There shall be freedom of scientific investigation in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, and States shall facilitate and encourage international cooperation in such investigation.”



Convinced that space science and technology and their applications, including satellite communications, Earth observation systems and satellite navigation technologies, provide indispensable tools for viable long-term solutions for sustainable development and can contribute effectively to efforts to promote the development of all countries and regions of the world, and in this regard recalling that the safe and sustainable use of space plays a critical role in the achievement of General Assembly resolution 76/3 of 25 October 2021, entitled “The ‘Space 2030’ Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development”,

Reaffirming the applicability of international law, including the Charter and the obligations of all States contained therein with respect to the threat or use of force in their international relations, including in their outer space activities,

Emphasizing the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space,

Reaffirming the need for all States parties to fully comply with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,³

Bearing in mind that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”, and that Member States must make every effort to avert the danger of such a war,

Reaffirming the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons,

Recognizing that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for, and is in the interest of maintaining, international peace and security,

Recalling that article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, inter alia,⁴ obligates States parties not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner,

Recalling also that article IX of the Outer Space Treaty, inter alia, provides that States parties shall be guided by the principle of cooperation and mutual assistance and shall conduct all their activities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, with due regard to the corresponding interests of all other States parties,

Reaffirming paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly,⁵ and convinced that, in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty, and in that regard taking note of the proposals submitted to the relevant organs of the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament,

Reaffirming also that negotiations for the conclusion of an international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space remain a priority task of the Conference on Disarmament,

Welcoming the discussions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space established pursuant to resolution 77/250 and of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours established

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

⁴ Article IV also provides that “The Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the Treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration of the Moon and other celestial bodies shall also not be prohibited.”

⁵ Resolution S-10/2.

pursuant to resolution [76/231](#) of 24 December 2021, and taking note of the adoption of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts⁶ on 16 August 2024,

Recognizing the importance of the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation of women and men in discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

1. *Urges* that all Member States carrying out activities in the exploration and use of outer space do so in full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and fostering international cooperation, collaboration and understanding;

2. *Calls upon* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation;

3. *Emphasizes* the urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, including, *inter alia*, the weaponization of outer space, and calls upon all States to advance further measures and with appropriate and effective provisions for verification, as early as possible, consistent with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty, and with the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, which could involve a combination of legally binding obligations and political commitments, and could relate to, *inter alia*, the threat or use of force against outer space objects, prohibiting the placement of weapons in outer space, preventing the possibility of the extension of armed conflict into outer space, as well as measures and efforts to reduce the risk of tensions arising from misperceptions and miscalculations;

4. *Affirms* the obligation of all States parties to fully comply with the Outer Space Treaty, including not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner;

5. *Emphasizes with concern* the grave consequences, including but not limited to the negative repercussions for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and, in turn, on sustainable development, on the environment and on the provision of civilian services, including social services and economic activities, which could result from a detonation of a nuclear weapon in outer space;

6. *Recalls* the obligations of States parties under multilateral treaties related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, including those pertaining to testing, and urges Member States, taking into account article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, not to develop nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction specifically designed to be placed in orbit around the Earth, to be installed on celestial bodies, or to be stationed in outer space in any other manner;

7. *Urges* the promotion of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all peoples, including through renewed efforts to uphold and promote universal accession to and compliance with the Outer Space Treaty, and calls upon all Member States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Outer Space Treaty without delay.

43rd plenary meeting
2 December 2024

⁶ [A/79/364](#).