Introduction of Draft Resolution on
Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

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to the First Committee of the 60th UNGA

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” sponsored by the following delegations:

Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Brunei, China, Congo, Cote D’Ivoire, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Yemen and Zambia.

It is a matter of satisfaction to our delegations that the resolution has been gathering strength every year. Although the resolution is traditionally a Non-Aligned initiative, we have noted the increasing interest of other states, reflecting the unprecedented advances in space technology coming within the reach of an increasing number of both developed and developing countries. As a result of globalization, space applications such as in communications, broadcasting, meteorology, navigation, education and health, environmental and crop management, have become crucial to the everyday functioning of modern society. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that the line between commercial and scientific use of space technology and military use of such technology is fast blurring, to the point that there is an urgent need today to ensure that space, the last frontier of humankind, is used only for non-offensive and non-belligerent purposes.

Mr. Chairman,
Our delegations hold the view that preventing an arms race in outer space is an easier task than attempting to control and decelerate such a race after it has begun. We cannot really afford an expensive competition in outer space when there remain so many other challenges before us such as poverty, hunger, disease and other deprivation.

We have no doubt that the broad thrust and substance of this resolution reflects the thinking and wishes of people all over the world. The unprecedented amazing photographs of recent space exploratory missions beamed across television screens around the world have once again rekindled in our hearts and minds, the wonder of space exploration and strengthened popular resolve to keep this pristine world of space, a peaceful arena for all mankind for all time.

The draft resolution refers to and affirms several previous multilateral agreements on this issue including the 10th Special Session of the General Assembly, to take further measures with a view to arriving at appropriate negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space. The resolution also refers to the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum as having the primary role in this connection, reflecting the hope expressed by many delegations during the general debate, that an Ad-hoc Committee on PAROS could be established with an appropriate mandate in 2006.

The resolution also urges states conducting activities in outer space to keep the Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress on bilateral and multilateral negotiations on this matter. We appreciate in this context, the valuable initiatives taken by the Russian Federation, China and Canada to press for the recommencement of work on space security issues at the CD.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the years, our resolution has indeed acquired the character of a ‘hardy perennial’ in the wise observation of Dag Hammarskjöld, establishing important norms. We, the sponsors, remain mindful that the text of the resolution should enjoy the widest possible support, as a manifestation of the collective will of the international community. Therefore, this year too, the text is similar to that of last year, with only technical
updates. It is our hope that the Member States in the First Committee will support this resolution as usual, with the widest, if not universal support.