STATEMENT

by Mr. Victor Vasiliev, Deputy Head of the Russian Delegation at the First Committee of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly

Presentation of the draft resolution of the First Committee entitled “Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities”

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,

Lately we witness a considerable growth of interest in space issues. Various initiatives and proposals have been voiced regarding how to close the existing “gap” in the normative basis of international space law. They pursue several objectives, including improving functioning safety of space objects, guaranteeing predictability and confidence-building in outer space, erecting a barrier to placing weapons in outer space.

In February 2008 at the Conference on Disarmament the Russian Federation jointly with the delegation of China introduced the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT). Its substantial discussion took place after which results a CD document was introduced containing questions and comments on the PPWT.

The CD Program of Work for 2009 adopted last May foresees the establishment of a Working Group for a substantial consideration of the issue on the prevention of arms race in outer space and other issues connected with it. We hope that in case the 2009 Program of Work of the Conference is adopted, similar proposal to establish the Working Group will be maintained and that will allow carrying out profound discussions on a broad scope of outer space topical issues pertaining to the CD agenda.

The traditional draft resolution of the First Committee entitled “Prevention of an Arm’s Race in Outer Space” (PAROS), introduced by Sri Lanka and Egypt on behalf of co-sponsors with Russia amongst them orients us towards the same.

The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in Vienna considers topical issues of possible measures of control against space debris in a conceptual manner. Russia takes an active part in their consideration.

In December 2008 the Council of Ministers of the European Union countries adopted a draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The work on its finalization has been evolved. We hope that this work will bring its fruits and the
Code will add to strengthening security and confidence in outer space. We have provided to the authors our concrete considerations.

Mr. Chairman,

Since 2005 Russia jointly with China has been moving in the GA First Committee the draft resolution entitled “Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities” (TCBMs). Traditionally this draft enjoys support of a broad circle of States. In accordance with it States present to the UN Secretary General their concrete considerations on the TCBMs with the objective to maintain international peace, security, promote international co-operation, as well as prevent arms race in outer space activities.

Allow me on behalf of the co-sponsors to introduce the respective draft resolution L. 40 of the 64th session of the UN GA Assembly. I would like to note that in spite of the fact that many elements of the draft resolution have remained unchanged in comparison with the previous year, this year we were able to achieve a qualitative improvement regarding its support. By this moment 58 States have become co-authors of the draft. We take note with satisfaction that this year all the EU countries have joined it as co-authors. A number of new countries have joined the project as co-authors. We are grateful for this support and call on those countries that have not yet done so to join the co-sponsors.

Among innovations as compared to the previous year the draft contains the notion that the European Union introduced the Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.

It is also with satisfaction that we take note of the fact that 13 States, as well as the EU collectively, forwarded their considerations to the UN Secretary General and that is reflected in his report A/64/138 and Add.1, and the draft resolution makes a reference to it. Taking into account that since 2005 the outer space topical issues have been considered in the First Committee, including in the UN General Secretary reports on the TCBMs issues, the current draft foresees the introduction of a final report at the 65th UN General Assembly, which would summarize the results of the five-year work. In this connection we ask the UN Secretariat to prepare a compilation of thoughts voiced during that period, as well as encourage all the Member-States to introduce their additional opinions by the 65th session of the UN GA regarding the ways to enhance transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

We hope that this year the draft resolution on the TCBMs will be adopted by consensus.