Statement

by

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First Secretary

Agenda Item 94 : Thematic Discussion on Outer Space (Disarmament Aspects)

64th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee)

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(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

The Sri Lankan delegation attaches high importance to the consideration of the Agenda Item entitled “Prevention of an Arms Race In Outer Space”. The delegation of Egypt, together with many co-sponsors, introduced the First Committee Resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space last year. The Resolution was adopted by 177 voting in favour.

Sri Lanka welcomes the important development this year in the Conference on Disarmament, which after more than a decade, has reached consensus on a programme of work. The momentum created this year should not be allowed to fade and we call upon all the members of the CD to seize the opportunity and seek an early commencement of substantive work during its 2010 Session.

Mr. Chairman,

The Resolution on PAROS enjoys the overwhelming support of the Member States. This broad support reflects the affirmation that space is the common heritage of mankind and should be exploited for peaceful purposes only. The existing legal instruments fail to unequivocally prevent testing, deployment and use of all kinds of weapons in outer space.

Outer space activities are accessible to an increasing number of States. Space is no doubt becoming an Indispensable area of human endeavor and mankind’s reliance on outer space is increasing with each passing day. Beyond severe economic repercussions resulting from disrupted commercial satellite communications, hostile actions in space can result in grave security threats. The danger of overpopulating orbital paths will exponentially increase should one or several countries actively pursue space weapons programmes. In addition to the enormous debris caused, active anti-satellite systems would deter investment in the peaceful uses of outer space and enhances the economic cooperation and competition that enhances life on
earth. Thus, outer space must be maintained as the common property of mankind, and its exploration and use for peaceful purposes must be for the common good of mankind. The use of outer space by the global community should not be jeopardized by human action. All States should accept that as a common goal.

Concerted action to obviate the threats to outer space security is needed. Taking measures to prevent an arms race in outer space is more effective, less complicated and less expensive than taking measures after it has taken off the ground.

Mr. Chairman,

In this context, the sponsors of the Draft Resolution wish to introduce this text for consideration and adoption by the First Committee. As the distinguished delegations may observe, the text, as in previous years, reiterates the complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts and highlights the importance of greater transparency in sharing information on all bilateral efforts in this field.

The sponsors of the Draft Resolution is of the view that the Conference of Disarmament has the primary role to address this issue and welcome the decision to establish a working group entitled “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” to discuss substantively, without limitation, all issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In addition, the Resolution this year incorporates many new developments in this field, taking into account the views of all concerned and in a spirit of compromise and recognizing the long held general understanding in this issue. We have accordingly produced a text reflecting technical updates together with new developments in the field. It is the expectation of the sponsors that the text of the Draft Resolution should enjoy the widest support reflecting the collective will of the international community. We, therefore, expect that all members of this Committee will be able to support the Draft Resolution and adopt it by consensus.

Thank You.