Mr. Chairman, my delegation takes the floor to explain its abstention on L.23. India is fully committed to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including ballistic missiles. The proliferation of ballistic missiles in our region has adversely impacted India’s security. This issue is complex *inter alia* because there is no global legal regime governing the possession and use of missiles and the development and modernisation of advanced weapon systems continues. This complexity demands that any initiative to address concerns related to ballistic missile proliferation should be inclusive, sustainable and comprehensive. We welcome the fact that the last GGE on missiles in all its aspects, which had among its members the representatives of several of the sponsors of L.23, emphasised in its report (A/63/176) the important role of the United Nations in providing a more structured and effective mechanism to build a consensus.

We acknowledge that 134 States consider the Hague Code a practical confidence building and transparency measure. Though, India is not a member of HCOC, we are willing to study it in the context of assurances that HCOC membership does not entail restrictions on testing and deployment of ballistic missiles on national security grounds and use of space launch vehicles would remain unaffected by the HCOC guideline on “exercising maximum restraint” on such activities.