Mr. Co-Chair,

India associates itself with the Statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of NAM.

2. It is a pleasure to attend this Joint Ad Hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committee which offers an important and unique opportunity to view space issues from different standpoints but seek common ground to address emerging challenges to space security, improve coordination across the UN system, even while respecting the specific mandates of the First and Fourth Committees, the Conference on Disarmament and the UN COPUOS.

3. India is a major space faring nation. India’s space programme has developmental and security dimensions. We have a well-established and highly successful and cost effective space launch vehicle programme and international cooperation with 36 countries and three international organizations. We are building a satellite for the SAARC region. We have sent a space craft to the Moon. Our Mars Orbiter Mission has recently completed one year in orbit. Last month, India’s first space based observatory for multi-wave length observations- ASTROSAT was launched.

4. Though India supported resolution 69/38 on TCBMs, it is unfortunate that a major space faring country like India was not included in the GGE on TCBMs. In our view a more representative GGE could have enhanced the content of the report. This is one example of how a decision to keep India out was actually a loss to the GGE.

5. India is party to all the major international treaties relating to Outer Space. We believe that this international legal framework needs to be strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and to prevent the weaponization of Outer Space. Thus, India supports the substantive consideration of the item on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in the CD, including negotiations in a subsidiary body as part of a Programme of Work as called for by UNGA resolution 69/31, which India has traditionally cosponsored and has done so again this year.

6. Outer Space should be an expanding frontier of cooperative activity. This places a responsibility on all space-faring nations to contribute to international efforts to safeguard outer space as the common heritage of humankind and preserve and promote the benefits flowing from advances made in space technology and its applications for all. We are against the weaponization of Outer Space and support international efforts to reinforce safety and security of space based assets.
7. While universal and nondiscriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in this field. We have consistently underlined that it is only by ensuring the right process and the right participation that we can ensure the right product of universal acceptance. At the New York meeting in late July this year, India joined other likeminded countries in stating that the Code of Conduct should be of a voluntary, non-legally binding nature. It should be non-discriminatory and internationally acceptable. The Code should be negotiated on the basis of consensus within the framework of the United Nations in an inclusive and transparent manner. Its objective should be to enhance space security for all space users based on transparency and confidence building measures.

8. India is prepared to give consideration to the revised PPWT presented by Russia and China in CD 1985 as a contribution to the various proposals for negotiating a legally binding instrument in the CD. There are important gaps in the draft text raising questions as to its utility in addressing current and emerging challenges and there would be value in further in-depth examine of these questions.

9. Notwithstanding our concerns about the GGE on TCBMs, India already implements a number of TCBMs- including registering space objects with the UN register, prelaunch notifications, measures in harmony with UN Space Mitigation Guidelines, participation in IADC activities with regard to space debris management, undertaking SOPA (Space Object Proximity Awareness) and COLA (Collision Avoidance) Analysis and numerous international cooperation activities. including hosting the UN affiliated Centre for Space and Science Technology Education is Asia and Pacific. India has been participating in all COPUOS sessions and would be chairing the STSC Committee in 2016. We look forward to the final report next year on the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

10. India supported UNGA resolution 69/32 on No First Placement of Weapons on Outer Space. We see the NFP of weapons in outer space as only an interim step and not a substitute for concluding substantive legal measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which should continue to be a priority for the international community.

11. India supports the substantive consideration of the issue of PAROS in the CD where it has been on the agenda since 1982, including inter alia negotiations in a subsidiary body as part of a Programme of Work. The CD’s membership includes all the military significant states. Since the nature of the threats to space security go beyond space debris, the CD is ideal for integrating all the concerns into a mandate for addressing them.

12. To conclude, India shares the concerns about emerging threats to space security. It is important that member States be given the incentive to protect their interests by investing in legally binding multilateral instruments rather than by resorting to national measures or interim and partial steps that do not fully address the concerns of all space actors.

Thank you.