Mr. Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Today, space-based applications offer unique resources, also in the domains of economic growth and innovation. Internet is very much dependent on space. Satellite systems are essential for monitoring land, maritime, and air security, as well as in facing critical issues such as natural disaster management and climate change. The space domain enables a number of services, which have become essential for the well-functioning of our economies and for our security.

The sharply increasing number of objects in space, together with our growing reliance on space resources, infrastructures, and activities, are among the major reasons why a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be put in place for the long-term sustainability, safety, and security of the space environment.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the Conference UNISPACE+50, which took place last June in Vienna, and the related draft Resolution foreseen for adoption by the UN General Assembly at its current session. We are proud to have taken an active role in its negotiation, and are ready to contribute to the development of the “Space2030” agenda and its implementation plan over the next two years. We also commend the establishment of a dedicated working group on the matter under the COPUOS.

Italy appreciates the important work carried out by the COPUOS Working Group on Long Term Sustainability (LTS) of Outer Space Activities in order to adopt a compendium of guidelines. We welcome that consensus was reached on the preamble and 21 LTS guidelines, although no agreement was achieved on the final adoption of the compendium, and on its transmission to the United Nations General Assembly.
Nevertheless, we believe that this important work could represent a solid basis for a more comprehensive voluntary instrument covering substantive aspects of safety, security, and sustainability of outer space activities. Such an instrument would contribute to globally-shared principles of responsible behaviour, which should include: non-interference in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space; prevention and mitigation of the creation of debris; international cooperation in space; preservation of the integrity of the space environment; equitable access to outer space; and transparency in the conduct of space exploration and exploitation activities.

We are also convinced that a crucial step towards achieving greater safety, security, and sustainability in outer space activities is represented by the effective implementation of TCBMs, including those identified by the GGE in 2013, endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

This set of TCBMs may be established by the proposed voluntary instrument, covering mechanisms of (i) information sharing related to national space strategies, policies, and programmes, (ii) notification regarding space missions and manoeuvres, with a view to reducing the risk of miscommunication and improving space traffic management and (iii) consultation with a view to decreasing the risk of disputes.

We therefore continue to believe that there would be value in agreeing a comprehensive voluntary instrument within the framework of the UN.

Mr. Chair,

Italy remains fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and to preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict as essential conditions to strengthen strategic stability.

We therefore support the on-going discussions within the GGE on PAROS, established by UNGA Resolution 72/250, in which we actively take part. While not excluding in the long run the objective of an international legally-binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we believe this goal could be better achieved through a progressive approach entailing first the adoption of a voluntary instrument covering safety, security, and sustainability of outer space activities. We will therefore continue to contribute to the debate within the PAROS GGE with a constructive approach, and we hope that such debate could in turn advance the work of the CD on this important domain.

Thank you.