Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Malaysia.

Mr. Chairman,

2. ASEAN recognizes access to outer space as an inalienable right of all States. We believe that the exploration and use of outer space should exclusively be for peaceful purposes only, and that it is in the collective benefit of humanity. It is therefore imperative that all activities in the outer space be done in accordance with international law and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space.

3. ASEAN reaffirms the vital importance of preventing an arms race in outer space and its weaponization. In this context, we urge all Member
States to respect and ensure the full implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/91 and previous resolutions on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

4. ASEAN welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 72/250 on this subject matter, of which one ASEAN Member State, Malaysia, was part of. While we note that substantive progress was made during the deliberations of the GGE in August 2018 and March 2019 respectively, we regret the failure of the GGE to reach consensus on its final report. We believe that the substantive discussions in the GGE could serve as a good basis for further negotiations towards adopting an international legally-binding instrument to prevent an arms race as well as the placement of weapons in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

5. ASEAN remains committed in the work of relevant multilateral bodies such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which serve as important platforms to promote international cooperation on the peaceful use of outer space.

6. In this regard, ASEAN supports deliberations on the Space2030 Agenda and its implementation plan. We emphasise for this agenda to be implemented through concrete measures, with the objectives of narrowing gaps in space technology between spacefaring and emerging spacefaring
nations, in favourable terms and on a non-discriminatory basis. In so doing, the Agenda will create conditions for the sustainable and inclusive development of space activities in support of SDGs.

7. While it is incumbent upon all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space should be exclusively for peaceful purposes, the General Assembly must play the important role to foster continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in this field. In this connection, ASEAN emphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), concerning the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including through the establishment of an ad hoc committee under this agenda item, without further delay. We believe that the immediate commencement of such work in the CD, will help sustain the momentum that has been built on this issue to date.

8. As recognized by the international community through General Assembly resolution 72/56, confidence-building measures play a critical role in preventing an arms race in outer space. In this regard, ASEAN will continue supporting initiatives of this nature, through existing platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). To date, three ARF workshops on Space Security have been convened to explore critical issues in this field, amongst others on space security threats and hazards, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures.
Mr. Chairman,

9. The world has witnessed much change since the dawn of the ‘Space Age’ about six decades ago. The international community has benefitted immensely from enhancements in the telecommunications and financial sectors which have been made possible by space-based technology. Moving forward, activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States. ASEAN encourages the strengthening of capacity-building programmes, with particular emphasis on developing countries, to ensure that outer space is, both in principle and in practice, a truly global commons which all States can avail themselves to.

10. Undoubtedly, with increased access to outer space, comes greater responsibilities on the entire UN membership. This further underscores the need for shared understanding and the acceptance of norms developed through multilateral engagement. As we navigate the complexities at hand, ASEAN calls for continued action in mitigating the effects of space debris through relevant multilateral fora, and we stand ready to engage with all parties in moving this agenda forward.

Thank you.