Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statements of the Arab Group, the African Group, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Outer-space is a shared heritage owned equally by all the peoples of the world, and a common asset for humanity. In today's world, almost all aspects of human activities on earth are either directly or indirectly dependent on outer-space technologies.

Taking into consideration the extreme volatility of the outer-space environment, it must not be allowed to turn into a scene for military conflicts that could have catastrophic implications.

Without prejudice to the possible value of TCBMs as interim measure in the short term, there is a clear need for a legally binding instrument that would complement the existing international legal framework by preventing an arms race in outer space and filling the existing legal gaps in this area, especially taking into consideration the alarming announcements by some States in relation to their plans of weaponizing outer space, in addition to the continued development of weapons designed to attack outer-space assets.

Such a legally binding instrument should have a comprehensive scope that primarily includes four prohibitions:
1) a prohibition on the placement of any weapons, defensive or offensive, in outer space,
2) a prohibition on any armed attacks against satellites or any outer-space assets,
3) a prohibition on any intentional harmful interference that interrupts the normal functioning of outer-space assets, and
4) a prohibition on the development, testing, and stockpiling of weapons that are specifically designed for the sole purpose of attacking outer space assets or being deployed or used as a weapon in outer space.

We believe that each of these prohibitions (contained in such a legally binding instrument) can be subject to specific verification measures, using a diversified set of tools that could be supplemented by transparency measures, as well as a mechanism for consultations and dispute-settlement. We also believe that such an instrument can be designed to avoid any infringement on the full utilization of the peaceful uses of outer-space or dual-use technologies by all States for purposes other than weaponization. The required definitions can be easily determined in a manner that would avoid such infringement. And progress can be achieved in a gradual approach.

The existing legal framework, especially the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 represents a good basis. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for serious efforts to reach new legally binding instruments that complement the existing legal framework, considering the relevant significant technological developments and the need for assurances that outer space would remain free of armed conflicts or arms races.
In this context, Egypt welcomes the substantive progress made during the discussions of the Governmental Group of Experts established pursuant to UNGA Resolution 72/250 which witnessed a remarkable level of depth in the discussions concerning all controversial legal and technical aspects. In spite of the regrettable fact that consensus on the un-bracketed text of the final report of the GGE was blocked by one State, this remarkable effort can and should represent a good basis for future discussions in order not to start from scratch.

Mr. Chairman

Sri Lanka and Egypt have once more tabled their joint annual resolution entitled “Prevention of an Arms Race in the Outer Space”. We count on the support of all Member States to this important resolution which attempts to bridge the gaps and create common grounds for further progress on PAROS.

Thank you.