Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria aligns itself with the Statements delivered on the Outer Space Cluster by the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

2. The desire to explore and exploit resources beyond the boundaries of the earth for economic development and improvement of the quality of life for humankind led to technological inventions and other activities in the outer space. Indeed, space technology has produced tools that enable us perform weather forecasting, environmental protection, tele-medicine, agriculture and education, to mention a few.

3. For this reason, the outer space and other celestial bodies must continue to be regarded as the common heritage of humankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all as well as safeguarded against armed conflicts. Their exploration and use shall be for peaceful purposes and should be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Nigeria believes that the adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy in 2016 and the establishment of the African Outer Space Agency in 2019 was a positive development towards the realization of an African Outer Space Programme within the framework of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

5. Prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of the vulnerability of the outer space environment and taking into consideration of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarization of outer space or prevent its weaponization. For that
purpose, Nigeria recognizes the need for a comprehensive legally binding treaty on the placement of weapons in outer space as well as on armed attacks against outer space objects.

Mr. Chairman,

6. My delegation welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts and underscored the importance of the substantive and comprehensive deliberations conducted by the Group as well as hope that their work deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement that could be contained in a legally binding instrument. This should include support for work by scientific, technical and military experts on development of possible means of verifying basic obligations that could be contained in a legally binding instrument since, GGE agreed that multilateral and non-discriminatory verification is one of the essential components of a future instrument on PAROS.

7. My delegation believes that all States, especially those with major space capabilities, have a special responsibility to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. They should also refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation.

8. In this regard, we reaffirm that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiation forum of the international community, which has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. We therefore categorically consider that it is time to negotiate, in
good faith, in the Conference on Disarmament on matters related to the "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

Mr. Chairman,

9. Nigeria remains committed to using its growing space science capabilities for developmental purposes and, to that end; we have embarked on several developmental projects. Some of the latter include desertification sensitivity index, population dissymetric analysis and carbon emission assessment. Nigeria firmly believes that space technology has the immense potential to benefit both developed and developing countries, and in this regard, the UN needs to promote equal, non-discriminatory access to outer space, irrespective of levels of social, economic or scientific development.

Thank you.