



Statement by Sri Lanka

Conference on Disarmament (CD) on 20 August 2026

Agenda Item 3 – Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to extend warmest congratulations to Permanent Representative of Pakistan, His Excellency Tahir Hussain Andrabi and to the delegation of Pakistan, on assuming the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Your Excellency, rest assured of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation as you guide the work of this august body. Sri Lanka also takes this opportunity to appreciate the leadership, vision and commitment of the previous Presidencies of the CD, this year.

I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome newly appointed Permanent Representative of Germany and Actg. Head of the Delegation of the USA.

Sri Lanka wishes to express its sincere appreciation to His Excellency Carlos Mario Foradori, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina, Coordinator of the Subsidiary Body 3 and the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects for his dedicated leadership and for presenting his reflections to the Conference, today.

Mr. President,

The agenda item 3 – 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space' has become an important aspect in global disarmament that warrants our attention more than ever

Sri Lanka's position on outer space security remains clear, consistent, and principled. Outer space is a common heritage of humankind. It must be preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all nations, irrespective of their degree of scientific or economic development. We firmly reject any strategic doctrine that seeks to

frame outer space as a warfighting domain or extended battle field for global power competition.

We strongly believe that the activities in outer space should be guided by the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, particularly Article 2 on the prevention of threat or use of force. Further we call that all activities in outer space should align with the existing provisions of the Outer Space Treaty.

My delegation takes positive note of the deliberations during the Subsidiary Body 3 as well as at the third session of the OEWG in last July. It is noted that while substantive divergences remain, particularly regarding the definition of 'space weapons' and 'the scope of future legal obligations', there is meaningful convergence on the urgent need to protect civilian space-based infrastructure, prevent harmful interference, and reduce the risks of miscalculation.

Mr. President,

As we look ahead to the future work of the OEWG and broader PAROS discussions in the CD, Sri Lanka wishes to outline the following key considerations:

- First, Sri Lanka is of the view that voluntary norms, behavioral guidelines, and Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs) are valuable interim steps to build trust and confidence. However, they are complementary and can never replace a comprehensive, legally binding, and multilaterally verifiable treaty approach prohibiting the placement of weapons in outer space.
- Second, the rapid developments in dual-use systems, commercial installations, and counterspace capabilities require balanced regulation. Measures must be comprehensive to address not merely the testing of destructive capabilities, but the research, production, deployment, and placement of all space weapon systems.
- Third, any future legal instrument must feature an adaptable verification mechanism. Rapid advancements in dual-use technology and the rise of commercial space actors require verification protocols that can evolve alongside technology, supported by a clear dispute resolution framework to manage compliance equitably.

- Fourth, frameworks established to mitigate space threats must not serve as pretext for discriminatory restrictions that impede developing, non-spacefaring nations from accessing space applications vital for climate resilience, disaster management, and sustainable development.
- Fifth, the generation of space debris poses an existential risk to the long-term sustainability of Near-Earth orbit. Sri Lanka stresses that space debris creation disproportionately impacts non-spacefaring nations reliant on global space assets. Preventing an arms race must encompass concrete rules on debris mitigation to avoid the disastrous consequences of orbital overcrowding and collision cascades.

In conclusion, Mr. President, as a longstanding co-sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution on PAROS together with Egypt, Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to working constructively within the Conference on Disarmament, the OEWG and other multilateral engagements, including the UNGA First Committee to ensure the long-term safety, security, and sustainable use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Thank you