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Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the Thematic Discussion on Outer Space at the First Committee of the 70th Session of the UNGA
(New York, 23rd October 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

China has all along advocated the peaceful use of outer space, and actively engaged in international exchanges and cooperation to this end. China has conducted satellite launching for more than 10 countries up to now. The successful launching of the 17th satellite of the Beidou positioning system in March this year marks the start of the global outreach for the Beidou system. China has participated actively in international cooperations under the framework of UNCOPUOS and that of APSCO, with its tireless effort to promote the peaceful use of outer space widely acknowledged.

As a result of rapid development of space technology and the growing number of space faring nations, the space environment is increasingly deteriorating in the face of evident risks caused by orbital congestion and space debris. As natural results of space exploration, these risks can be mitigated through cooperative efforts of the international community. At the same time, given the temptation to achieve strategic advantage provided by military space capability, the growing tendency towards space weaponization is having a greater impact on space security and the international strategic architecture. This is a more serious threat we face in terms of space security.

The international community share the consensus that to ensure the peaceful exploration and to prevent weaponization of and the subsequent arms race in space, serves the common interests of all countries. This consensus is manifested by the consecutive adoption of a UNGA Resolution on PAROS by overwhelming majority since 1994.

Unequivocally opposing space weaponization and arms race in space, China has been an active participant in the multilateral arms control process on space security. China and Russia jointly proposed a PPWT draft in 2008 and put forward an updated version last June. We value comments and suggestions made by some countries, have studied them carefully. Taking into consideration these comments and recent development in space security, we have put forward a feedback working
paper to the CD recently to address relevant concerns. We call on all countries to work for more convergence and start multilateral negotiations on an arms control treaty so as to effectively maintain safety and security of space.

China and Russia have put forward a NFP resolution draft in the First Committee of the UNGA, which has been adopted by a large majority of countries. This reflects the common call of the international community for the prevention of weaponization in space. The adoption of the resolution is of great importance to the multilateral arms control process on space security. We hope more countries will extend their support to the resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

China is of the view that appropriate and feasible TCBMs could contribute to enhancing mutual confidence, reducing misinterpretations and regulating space activities. They can complement the process of the prevention of weaponization and PAROS. However, given their intrinsic limitations, TCBM can not replace the negotiation of a legally-binding arms control treaty.

In 2013, the UN GGE on TCBM has concluded its work with a balanced report after taking into consideration suggestions from all sides. The report is an authoritative instrument that serve as important basis for future work on TCBMs. It also has to be stressed that countries are at different stage of developing space capability, thus their concerns and their readiness to embrace certain TCBMs vary widely. Only when discussions are conducted on an equal footing, in a open manner, with gaps of development taken into account, can TCBMs emerged out of these discussions be implemented smoothly and effectively.

China took part in the ICOC meeting held at the UN headquarters in late July. We took note that many participating states had expressed their concerns on procedural as well as substantive matters. We call on sponsors of the ICOC to treat these concerns in an earnest manner and pursue the negotiation under the framework of UN, through a UN mandate in a equitable, open, transparent manner, so that the ICOC could accommodate concerns of all relevant stakeholders, be effective and widely supported.

China will continue to work with the international community and make its due contribution to space security and sustainability.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.