



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Conference on Disarmament
(Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space)**

28 March 2024

**Statement delivered by Mr. Eugenio Poti
Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. President,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Italy welcomes today's substantive discussion, as a contribution to our common goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. We believe that there is an urgent need to improve space security in an increasingly congested, contested and competitive space environment.

Italy is historically engaged in actively improving space security and is strongly committed to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is also essential to safeguard the long-term use of the space environment for peaceful purposes on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.

The space domain is becoming more and more complex. The current legal framework governing space activities, which has its cornerstone in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, needs to be further strengthened and consolidated, considering the pace at which space activities are developing and diversifying.

While new opportunities are opening up, we face the challenging task of ensuring that outer space remains an operationally stable and safe environment. To this end, we support a broad-based approach that includes examining existing international law, developing options for trust and confidence-building measures as well as possible legally binding measures in the future.

Depending on the area of outer space in which activities take place, security has become closely interconnected with crucial economic and social functions on Earth, making it increasingly critical to ensure that future space exploration and exploitation activities be conducted in a peaceful and beneficial manner for all. Improving space security is therefore necessary not only



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for space faring nations but for every country, including developing ones, given the contemporary world's reliance on space systems and services.

I also would like to use this opportunity today to recall some elements of the Italian National security strategy for space, approved in 2019 as a part of our National Strategy for Space. In the last fifty years, Italy has developed proprietary space capabilities in the field of Telecommunications and Earth Observation. Moreover, at European level, we actively contribute to the development and implementation of important programs and scientific missions. Our National security strategy aims at strengthening and protecting national public and private space infrastructures, and it serves as a reference for institutional, industrial, scientific and commercial organizations in developing their plans, schedules, acquisitions and operations.

In light of the strategic nature of space infrastructures and their intrinsic link with the national security and protection architecture, it is essential to adopt a stratified and all-inclusive approach to prevent, deter and, if necessary, defend against hostile attitudes. Moreover, strengthening and protecting national capabilities will remain vital to increase the national security and resilience in response to crises and emergency events.

Mr. President,

We remain concerned by kinetic threats, such as the persistent development or testing of anti-satellite (ASAT) systems, damage and collisions resulting from risky maneuvers or other dangerous behaviors. In this context, we welcome the commitment made by several Countries, including all EU Member States, not to conduct destructive tests of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles. Non-kinetic threats such as cyberattacks, electronic warfare to overwhelm satellites and compromise their operation or use of laser beams to damage optical sensors are also a major concern. Hybrid space operations encompass an increasing number of sectors, adding an extra layer of complexity to risk and threat assessments.

Italy has strongly supported the renewal of the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior and looks forward to engaging with other delegations on this approach in future.

In conclusion, it is clear that we must spare no effort in preventing an arms race in outer space, today more than ever.

I thank you, Mr. President.