



Permanent Mission of Italy to
the Conference on Disarmament

Prevention of an Arms-Race in Outer-Space (PAROS)
Open-ended Working Group (OEWG)
Informal consultations

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for convening these informal consultations on a theme that reflects a shared concern and offers a possible avenue for progress. We also wish to thank the panelists for their insightful presentations and for launching this interactive debate.

Destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT) missile tests result in the destruction of the targeted satellite and generate multiple long-lived space debris. Space debris constitutes a significant, growing, and indiscriminate threat to all space objects, irrespective of whether its creation is unintentional or deliberate, thereby increasing the risk of misunderstanding and possibly leading to uncontrolled escalation. We deem intentional debris creation particularly alarming also because such activities may demonstrate or reinforce a State's capability and intent to target the satellites of a potential adversary.

The commitment not to conduct DA-ASAT tests was set out in UNGA Resolution 77/41, supported by a large majority of States, including Italy. Resolution 77/41 may well become the basis of a possible norm to engage a large majority of States to responsible behaviour. This OEWG is the appropriate forum to seek a general

understanding along this line. Let me add in this regard that Italy joined a moratorium on such tests, and we strongly encourage more States to follow suit.

We support further strengthening and, in due course, formalizing the existing international commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests, including through the development of a legally binding instrument. Such an instrument could complement the existing norm of responsible behavior by providing a clear and durable prohibition on destructive DA-ASAT testing. At the same time, its scope should remain sufficiently focused to address the specific risks posed by debris-generating destructive tests, without prejudging legitimate research and development activities that do not involve the destruction of space objects. The observable nature of such tests also makes this area particularly conducive to effective verification and confidence-building measures, including through the use of existing space situational awareness capabilities.

We would like to thank Canada for presenting its working paper. We find the historical example of the Limited Test Ban Treaty instructive, demonstrating that progress can be achieved by first addressing a specific and clearly identifiable form of conduct whose harmful effects are well established and which can be effectively monitored. In this context, establishing a clear prohibition on destructive DA-ASAT missile testing could represent an important first step towards reducing space threats and could help build confidence and momentum for further measures addressing other risks to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities.

We are ready to continue to engage constructively in future discussions on this topic, including within this forum.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

