



**66th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

**31 May – 9 June 2023**

**Statement by Australia**

**Agenda Item 5: Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes**

Chair

For decades the international rules-based order has underpinned global stability, powered unprecedented growth, prosperity, and human development and shaped responsible behaviours. Australia seeks to maintain a region and a world governed by accepted rules and norms where each country can pursue the use of outer space without coercion or fear of force. Australia seeks to be a partner of choice – particularly for countries of our region – and this includes on matters of outer space. We want to work with a range of partners to ensure all states in the epicentre of global economic growth can inclusively benefit from space technologies and broader collaboration under agreed rules, standards and norms.

Australia has been pleased to see productive discussions on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour. Firstly, through the strong engagement of States providing input to the Secretary-General's report in 2021. And secondly, by States' active engagement in the

first three sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group (or OEWG) established by resolution 76/231. From the outset, Australia's ambition for the OEWG has been for it to produce outcomes and recommendations that will bolster security, transparency, stability, predictability, and trust. We want the OEWG to identify responsible behaviours and assist improving communication and consultation between States.

We have stated this can be progressed through non-binding norms, rules and principles, such as the implementation of transparency and confidence building measures – TCBMs. Some ten years on from the consensus report of the Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs, the OEWG has underscored the valuable role they play in clarifying intent and reducing the risk of misperception and miscalculation. We welcome the adoption of the consensus report in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which has provided recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

If we are to find ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, we encourage all States to work collaboratively and constructively towards a consensus report for the OEWG. We hope such a report can capture proposals for new norms, rules and principles put forward by States.

Chair,

Discussions in this Committee may be helpfully informed by activities in other fora. In this regard, Australia welcomed last year's dedicated session on space security and sustainability held jointly by the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly. Key themes were States' increasing reliance on outer space systems for human life and security; the importance of preserving space as a domain of peace; equitable access to space; tackling the problem of outer space debris; and how uses of space could support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Chair,

In 2022 Australia joined the commitment to not conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing. This is an important demonstration of a responsible space behaviour, and we urge other states, even those without anti-satellite capability, to join us in this commitment. In doing so, states will demonstrate one way to reduce the effects of space debris that risks the safety, stability, and sustainability of outer space.

Further to this commitment, we encourage all states to take steps to avoid creating long-lived orbital debris to preserve the space environment for future exploration and use, and to adhere to the obligations in Article 9 of the Outer Space Treaty in the conduct of activities in outer space.

Thank you.