

**Statement by the Head of the Russian Delegation K.V.Vorontsov  
at the second session of the Open-Ended Working Group  
established pursuant to UNGA resolution 76/231  
(12 September 2022)**

Mr Chairperson,

We wish you success in the work of the second session of the UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), established pursuant to UNGA resolution 76/231. We are confident that, under your leadership, the OEWG will contribute to the prevention an arms race in outer space (PAROS). You can count on support and cooperation of the Russian delegation.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated the preservation of outer space for exclusively peaceful activities of all States on an equitable basis. Our position of principle has not changed – the only way to reach this goal is by developing universally recognized legally binding principles and norms of international law that should be comprehensive and aim to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The ever-growing risks of outer space becoming a launching pad for aggression and war merely confirm the urgent nature of this task. We reiterate our concern about the realisation of policies aimed at the placement of weapons in outer space and the use of outer space for military purposes by the group of UN Member-States in order to ensure their superiority and supremacy. We note that they are carrying out ambitious programmes to develop weapons systems designed for the threat or use of force in, from or against outer space.

Such actions are detrimental to international peace and security and could result in severe destabilisation and an arms race in outer space, which would completely undermine the prospects for arms limitation and reduction in general.

We call on the above-mentioned countries to stop their attempts to turn outer space into a new arena of competition and conflict among States.

We would like to underline an extremely dangerous trend that goes beyond the harmless use of outer space technologies and has become apparent during the events in Ukraine. Namely, the use by the United States and its allies of the elements of civilian, including commercial, infrastructure in outer space for military purposes. It seems like our colleagues do not realize that such actions in fact constitute indirect involvement in military conflicts. Quasi-civilian infrastructure may become a legitimate target for retaliation. Actions of the Western countries needlessly put at risk the sustainability of peaceful space activities, as well as numerous social and economic processes on Earth that affect the well-being of people, in particular in developing countries. At the very least, this provocative use of civilian satellites is questionable under the Outer Space Treaty, which provides for the exclusively peaceful use of outer space, and must be strongly condemned by the international community.

United Nations Member States should focus on assuming national and international obligations to not place weapons of any kind in outer space (including in orbit around the Earth and on celestial bodies) and prohibit the threat or use of force against or with space objects, as well as introduce a complete and comprehensive ban on strike weapons in outer space for use against space objects.

We would like to remind you about our proposals in this regard. Specifically, this approach entails the following commitments:

- not to use space objects as a means of destroying any targets on Earth, in the air, or in outer space;

- not to develop, test or deploy weapons in outer space for any purpose, including missile defence, as anti-satellite weapons, for use against targets on Earth or in the air, as well as to dismantle such systems already available to States;

- not to develop, test, deploy or use space weapons for missile defence as anti-satellite weapons, for use against targets on Earth or in the air;
- not to destroy, damage, disrupt the normal functioning of, or change the flight trajectory of space objects of other States; and
- not to assist or incite other States, groups of States, international, intergovernmental or any other non-governmental organizations, including non-governmental legal entities incorporated, registered or located in the territory under their jurisdiction and/or control, to participate in the above activities.

Without reliable guarantees for preserving outer space free of weapons, enshrined in an international legally binding instrument on PAROS, it is futile to address issues relating to the peaceful use of outer space and security of outer space activities. The Russian-Chinese draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (PPWT) is designed to serve as the basis for such an instrument.

In the run-up to the 77th session of the UNGA, we would like to inform the distinguished delegations that, as a follow-up to last year's UNGA resolution on further practical measures on PAROS (76/230) and also taking into account the recommendations of the relevant report by the UN Secretary General (A/77/80), we have suggested in its updated draft to proceed to the next key stage of our work. This refers to the launch of a group of governmental experts (GGE) to study and submit recommendations on substantive elements of a multilateral legally binding instrument on PAROS, including, in particular, the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. We believe that since 2019, when the GGE on PAROS concluded its work, there has been an urgent need to resume the work of such a group. We call on all States to support and co-sponsor our draft resolution.

Mr Chair,

Few words about the proposed timetable of our work. We would like to draw the attention to the fact that its thematic layout does not reflect the existing

reality. We expect that all discussions within the Group should be conducted in strict linkage to the accomplishment of the tasks PAROS.

In this regard we would like to warn the participants in the OEWG against focusing on issues that are not core to UNGA First Committee and that deal with the regulation of space activities. The bulk of the topics touched upon in UNGA Resolution 76/231, including various aspects of ensuring safety and security of space missions, are already the subject of discussions within the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). It is unacceptable within the framework of the OEWG to disregard the competence of COPUOS, since it would threaten to undermine the Committee's key role in discussing the space agenda. This important issue, in the context of the Group's work, will be addressed in our separate statement.

When it comes to the development of any transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (TCBMs), which could also include the "rules of responsible behaviours", we assume that they should seek a complete ban on the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against or with outer space objects, and complement, but in no way substitute, effective agreements on PAROS.

We would like to warn that an approval of some fragmented, non-inclusive rules for regulating space activities, that do not take into account approaches of all UN Member States and seek to ensure space dominance of a small group of States rather than address the key goal of PAROS, would not help to maintain international peace and security and would escalate tensions in space, further divide the international community and limit equal access to outer space aimed at its exploration and use for peaceful purposes.

In the context of the issues to be addressed by the OEWG, we reiterate our position that it is unreasonable and inappropriate to consider the applicability of international humanitarian law (IHL) to the activities of States in outer space. The IHL, also referred to as the law of armed conflict, has a specific subject of legal

regulation, i.e. relations regarding the protection of victims of war and the rules of engagement.

Debates over the applicability or inapplicability of IHL automatically lead to the conclusion that there is a real possibility of an armed conflict in outer space. Moreover, such an approach is not in line with international space law, according to which activities carried out in outer space and on celestial bodies are only possible for peaceful purposes. The common interest of all humankind in the progress of the exploration and the use of outer space precisely for peaceful purposes is reflected in the fundamental 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

The Russian Federation believes that it is necessary for the OEWG to produce results that would help to achieve the goals of PAROS, which should not become a subject to reconsider, and develop a relevant multilateral legally binding instrument containing guarantees for preventing the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects or with their use.

Thank you.