



# General Assembly

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## **Open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors**

Geneva, 9 – 13 May 2022

Item 6(a) of the agenda

### **Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors**

#### **Taking stock of the existing international legal and other normative frameworks concerning threats arising from State behaviors with respect to outer space**

## **Written contribution**

### **Submitted by the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)\***

**\*Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**

1. The Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) recognize access to outer space as an inalienable right of all States. ASEAN believes that the exploration and use of outer space should be exclusively for peaceful purposes, in the collective interest of humanity. All activities in outer space must be conducted in accordance with international law and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space
2. ASEAN reaffirms that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its weaponization is of vital importance. ASEAN urges all Member States of the United Nations to respect and ensure the full implementation of all related United Nations instruments and relevant General Assembly resolutions.
3. ASEAN expresses its serious concern regarding the threats to international peace and security by the possible weaponization of outer space or turning outer space into a domain for warfare and armed conflicts. ASEAN reemphasizes the urgent need for the commencement of substantive negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a legally binding and multilaterally verifiable instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), including the prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space and the prohibition of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.
4. ASEAN continues to reaffirm the need for a universal, comprehensive, and nondiscriminatory multilateral approach toward the issue of missiles in all its aspects, negotiated multilaterally within the U.N. Any initiatives on this subject should take into account security concerns of all states and their inherent right to peaceful uses of space technologies.

5. ASEAN remains committed to the work of relevant multilateral bodies such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which serve as important platforms to promote international cooperation on the peaceful use of outer space.
  6. As it is incumbent upon all States to ensure that the use and exploration of outer space remains peaceful, the General Assembly must play a vital role in fostering continued dialogue on current issues and challenges in this field.
  7. It is in this context that ASEAN welcomes the establishment of this Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 76/231. ASEAN Member States will engage constructively in this OEWG.
  8. The world has witnessed much change since the dawn of the 'Space Age' about six decades ago. The international community has benefitted immensely from enhancements in the telecommunications and financial sectors which have been made possible by space-based technology.
  9. It is clear that activities in outer space should not remain the exclusive preserve of a small group of States. ASEAN therefore urges all Member States of the United Nations, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and the maintenance of international peace and security.
  10. ASEAN encourages the strengthening of capacity-building programmes, with particular emphasis on developing countries, to ensure that outer space is, both in principle and in practice, a truly global commons which all States can avail themselves to.
  11. Undoubtedly, with increased access to outer space comes greater responsibilities on the entire United Nations membership. This further underscores the need for shared understanding and the acceptance of norms developed through multilateral engagement.
  12. This OEWG will have an opportunity to flesh out understandings on the foundational principles of international space law as set out in the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty), such as equality among all States, spacefaring or otherwise; the non-appropriation of outer space; the applicability of international law in outer space; no-placement of weapons of mass destruction; State responsibility and liability; the State of registry; the duty of due regard; and international cooperation.
  13. ASEAN also supports other activities and initiatives that help deepen understanding on issues pertaining to space security. Within our region, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has made contribution in this connection, by organizing Space Security Workshops. These workshops explored critical issues in this field, amongst others on space security threats and hazards, as well as transparency and confidence-building measures. ASEAN will continue to support initiatives of this nature.
  14. As the international community navigates the complexities at hand, ASEAN calls for continued action in mitigating the effects of space debris through relevant multilateral fora. ASEAN Member States stand ready to engage with all parties in moving this agenda forward.
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