

76th Session of the UNGA First Committee, New York
Explanation of Vote of India
on Draft Resolutions under “Outer Space” Cluster
- Delivered by Ms. Subhashini Narayanan, Counsellor (Disarmament)

L.50: No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space

India has voted in favour of L.50 on the No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space. The resolution states that the legal regime applicable to outer space needs to be consolidated and reinforced. India supports this objective as well as strengthening of the international legal regime to protect and preserve access to space for all and to prevent, without exceptions, the weaponization of outer space. We support the substantive consideration of PAROS in the CD. We see No First Placement of weapons in outer space as a useful initiative and not a substitute for substantive legal measures to ensure the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We have voted against PP5 of this resolution due to the inclusion of the phrase “a community of shared future for humankind”. This phrase is part of a political ideology and a resolution of the UNGA is not the appropriate place to reflect ideologies of countries.

L.52: Reducing Space Threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours

As a major spacefaring nation, India has vital developmental and security interests in space. India remains opposed to the weaponization of outer space. India has not, and will not, resort to any arms race in outer space. India has been a consistent advocate of preserving the outer space as a common heritage of humankind. We remain committed to maintaining outer space as an ever-expanding frontier for cooperative endeavors of all space faring nations.

India continues to support substantive consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space within the multilateral framework of the UN. We remain committed to negotiation of a legally-binding instrument on PAROS to be negotiated in the CD. While not a substitute for legally binding instruments, TCBMs can play a useful and complementary role to legally-binding instruments. India has been an active participant in the GGE on PAROS, which concluded its session in March 2019.

India has been voting in favor of most resolutions submitted under the Outer Space cluster. However, we were constrained to abstain on L.52. While we share with the United Kingdom and other sponsors, the objective of reducing space threats, we believe that the resolution does not address the key issue of preventing arms race in outer space through a universally acceptable and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument on PAROS. We have submitted our views to this effect to the UNSG's report in response to the resolution 75/36 of 2020.

Furthermore, the resolution introduces a number of subjective elements, including responsible and irresponsible behavior, characterization and interpretation of behavior as well as perception of threats, which further complicates our task at hand. We believe that this resolution diverts from the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space, which continues to be a priority for the international community. We have voted against some operative paragraphs for the same reason.

L.53: Further Practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space

India has traditionally supported this resolution and has voted in favour of resolution L-53.

As to PP5, India has cast a negative vote, the reasons for which we have explained in our EOJ for L. 50. As to OP7, India has abstained as we believe that there is a pressing need for a legally binding instrument on PAROS and any other step, in our view, falls short of achieving this objective.
