



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN General
Assembly Debate on the use of veto on Outer Space Resolution**

(6 May 2024)

Mr. President,

The General Assembly is meeting pursuant to its resolution 76/262, which mandates the President General Assembly to convene a meeting, when a veto is cast in the Security Council.

2. The vetoed draft resolution outlined in document S/2024/302, addresses an issue of global concern, which impinges on the security of all States and peoples.

3. The threats to security in and from outer space have escalated sharply in recent years. This is evident from the placement of weapons in space, and its increasing characterization as the next war-fighting frontier in the military policies and doctrines of major powers.

4. The deployment of missile defence systems and their amalgamation with outer space systems is reinforcing offensive and defensive capabilities with severe implications for strategic stability at the global and regional levels. Anti-Satellite Weapons (ASAT) are being complemented by non-kinetic capabilities. With modern warfare increasingly reliant on space-based technologies, there is significant risk that conflicts on land, sea and air will spill over into outer space.

Mr. President,

5. The US-Japan draft resolution rightly recognized that the prevention of an arms race in Outer Space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security; underscored the importance of the Outer Space Treaty; and reiterated that the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

Mr. President,

6. If nuclear weapons were deployed in Outer Space, this would indeed constitute a violation of the Outer Space Treaty. But, we are told that the information available regarding the alleged deployment of nuclear weapons in Outer Space does not indicate an “imminent” deployment of such weapons. Thus, there is time to establish the veracity of this information and avert any move to deploy such weapons in Outer Space. We can do this in the relevant forums,

particularly, the Conference on Disarmament, which, since 1982, has on its Agenda the item on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

7. Furthermore, while the deployment of non-nuclear weapons may not explicitly violate the Outer Space Treaty, it does violate the universal desire of all peoples to prevent the “weaponization” of Outer Space and to reverse its “militarization” which has already taken place.

8. Pakistan has always maintained a principled position that resolutions on global disarmament issues should be deliberated and concluded in an inclusive and transparent manner within the appropriate forums: the Conference on Disarmament, the UN Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the GA etc.

Mr. President,

9. It is regrettable that there has been no progress on a Treaty to Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space for over four decades. Initially, some dismissed the possibility of an arms race in outer space. Then, they argued that it was too late to prevent its militarization and called for focusing on non-weaponization measures. Now, they want to concentrate on behavior rather than capabilities, ignoring the inherent risks of legitimizing the weaponization of Outer Space.

10. Pakistan advocates a comprehensive approach with a dual focus on both capabilities and behaviour. We have consistently advocated urgent negotiations on a legally binding instrument on PAROS. Concurrently, we have also actively contributed to non-legally binding measures such as Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs). However, the evident gaps in the international legal regime cannot be filled by TCBMs or other non-legally binding norms.

11. It is regrettable that a few states continue to block the start of such negotiations in the CD on a legally binding instrument that prohibits the placement of weapons in outer space and outlaws the threat or use of force against outer space objects. They cite definitional and verification related issues without explaining how such negotiations would undermine their security interests. They have also failed to justify why definitional and verification issues cannot be

taken up during negotiations – an approach that they advocate for another item in the CD.

Mr. President,

12. We hope, therefore, that this issue of weaponization of Outer Space, which has been raised in the Security Council, will be transmitted to the C.D. for further consideration within the context of negotiations on a Treaty to prevent an arms race in Outer Space.

I thank you.