



**United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs & United Nations Office  
for Outer Space Affairs Webinar Series**

**“Facilitating Multilateral Dialogue  
on the Development of Norms, Rules and Principles of  
Responsible Behaviour in Outer Space”**

**Opening Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**

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Virtual Event  
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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this webinar series, co-organized with our good friends and colleagues from the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

The purpose of these sessions is to promote better understanding of the threats to space systems and the range of ideas that exist to mitigate them, in accordance with the aims of resolution 75/36, adopted by the General Assembly in December last year.

At the outset, I wish to commend the United Kingdom for leading this new initiative in the General Assembly and for the inclusive approach it has taken in seeking views on how to move these issues forward, and in promoting the widest possible engagement.

In this connection, I am pleased with the high number of responses we received for inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request in resolution 75/36. Indeed, many of the submissions contain detailed analyses and proposals for measures that can be elaborated by States. In total, we have so far received [26] responses from Member States, two from other entities and seven from non-governmental organizations.

This level of interest is very encouraging. It is a sign of the importance of this topic, but also of the readiness of the international community to elaborate new measures designed to ensure the future of outer space is peaceful, sustainable, secure and safe.

Indeed, we are currently in an exciting era of rapid growth in the use and number of actors operating in outer space. We are also on the verge of a renewed era of space exploration, with multiple programmes to return humans to the Moon and even to travel beyond.

At the same time, we see outer space increasingly devolving into an arena for strategic military competition. Terrestrial geo-political rivalries are being reproduced in earth orbit and beyond. This is increasing the risk that armed conflict could be extended one day into or even

be initiated in outer space.

These trends are being accompanied by a growing capacity by a number of States to attack space systems with a variety of means, both from space and from the Earth.

While these developments are inherently concerning, it is even more troubling that, when it comes to many counter-space concepts, we lack a common understanding of the impact and consequences of their use.

Many well-founded concerns have already been identified. For example:

Damage or disruption to critical security infrastructure, like early warning or nuclear command and control, could be deeply dangerous and destabilizing.

Attacks generating large amounts of long-lasting debris could pose an un-mitigatable hazard for the use of critical orbits and imperil access to space by future generations.

The lack of understanding and clarity around dual-use technologies could diminish trust and create more incentive for States to develop counterspace systems.

And any of these trends, if we leave them unchecked, can contribute to what increasingly appears like an arms race in outer space.

The normative and legal framework governing outer space is not sufficiently developed to prevent these trends or to protect against their undesirable consequences.

I believe it remains the case that possible solutions to outer space security can involve a combination of binding and voluntary norms, rules and principles. Furthermore, the pursuit of effective measures in each of these tracks does not have to be mutually exclusive. Rather, work in each, or indeed in both simultaneously, should be mutually reinforcing and be complementary.

Finally, as in other areas of emerging technology, we believe deliberations on this topic would benefit from the active participation by all segments of the space policy community,

including NGOs, humanitarian actors, the private sector and academia.

We have therefore designed this event to facilitate broad multi-stakeholder engagement, as envisaged in Secretary-General Guterres' Agenda for Disarmament. I am also pleased and encouraged that the programme includes a great number of highly qualified women.

It is our hope that these sessions will facilitate our preparation of the substantive report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 75/36. I am very much looking forward to the outcome of these sessions.

Thank you very much for your attention.

And now, it is my pleasure to turn over the floor to my colleague and co-convener, Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.