



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

**Statement by Pakistan at the Fourth Meeting of Subsidiary Body 3,
Conference on Disarmament, Geneva
10 June 2025
“Identification and clarification of key terms and verification”**

Mr. Coordinator,

Let me begin by highlighting Pakistan’s principled position: **a credible and effective approach to outer space security must integrate both capabilities and behaviours.**

As seen in other arms control regimes, real progress has required a combined approach: behavioural norms **alongside** clear prohibitions on specific capabilities.

Accordingly, Pakistan has long supported the elaboration of a **legally binding international instrument** that addresses all risks including those emanating from an arms race in outer space and **weaponization of outer space** in a comprehensive manner.

This must include not only norms of responsible behaviour but also **explicit prohibitions on the placement and use of weapons in outer space.**

We recognize that some delegations argue that definitional ambiguity, dual-use complexities, and verification difficulties make legal progress impractical. However, we believe that **these challenges are not insurmountable**, nor should they be used to justify delay or inaction.

Mr. Coordinator,

The framing of “responsible behaviour” must not become a substitute for addressing the very real and the presently ongoing development of capabilities designed for **warfighting in outer space.**

While many space objects are indeed dual-use—capable of performing both peaceful and potentially hostile functions—leading to distinction challenges, this is **not universally the case**.

Also we heard a very interesting argument that not all satellites in outer space can be immediately repurposed to be a weapon. They need inherent characteristics.

Most importantly, there is a distinct and narrower category of **purpose-built, unambiguous space weapons**—systems whose sole logic is to apply force in, from, or through outer space.

Let me cite a few examples of such systems:

- **Space-based interceptors**, designed to destroy ballistic missiles from orbit, serve no civil or commercial purpose. Their function is purely military and destructive, or
- **Fractional Orbital Bombardment Systems (FOBS)**, or
- **Direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles**

These systems do not reside in a legal or functional grey zone. **They are clearly identifiable as space weapons, and can—and must—be prohibited.**

We are already witnessing the emergence of such systems, as articulated in various national doctrines and defence reviews.

Mr. Coordinator,

The definitional challenge that we face is not unique to outer space. Other arms control treaties have successfully managed dual-use dilemmas:

- The **Chemical Weapons Convention** defines weapons through a **purpose-based test**—whether a substance is intended for use as a weapon, regardless of its other possible applications.
- The **ABM Treaty** of 1972 prohibited space-based interceptors not based on their physical form but on their intended function—even before they were deployed.

These precedents demonstrate that **definitions grounded in intent and effect are both feasible and effective**, particularly when coupled with transparency measures and verification mechanisms.

We believe that an agreement on definitions is not a prerequisite for launching negotiations of an international legal instrument on PAROS. The definitions and key terms can be discussed during the course of negotiations.

Mr. Coordinator,

We are also often told that **verification in outer space is unworkable**. Yet in reality, space is also one of the most **monitored domains** in the history of arms control.

- Thousands of objects are tracked in real-time through **space situational awareness (SSA)** networks operated by states, international bodies, and even academic institutions.
- Launches are publicly declared and closely monitored;
- Standard arms control verification measures—such as **pre-launch notifications, inspection of payload integration facilities, telemetry sharing, and orbital behaviour monitoring**—can be readily adapted to the space context.

The **ABM Treaty** functioned for three decades without a single inspector in space.

Mr. Coordinator,

In conclusion in Pakistan's view, a credible space security regime must therefore **address both behaviour and capabilities**. Norms of responsible conduct are necessary, but they cannot alone restrain the development and deployment of inherently offensive systems. Failing to prohibit such placements while focusing exclusively on behavioural norms **leaves the door wide open to a future of space-based confrontation**.

We believe that **the best way to address the existing legal and normative gaps in outer space** is to initiate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament towards a **legally binding treaty** prohibiting the **placement of weapons in outer space** and outlawing the **threat or use of force against outer space objects**. We hope that the draft report you produce contains a clear recommendation towards that end.

We must not allow definitional complexity or verification concerns to paralyze collective progress. **Arms control has never been about eliminating all uncertainty, but about managing it to prevent conflict**.

Pakistan remains committed to actively contributing to these discussions and to ensuring that **our collective efforts result in tangible progress** toward

preventing the weaponization of outer space and safeguarding it for future generations.

Thank you.