Statement by Md. Faruk Hossain, Counsellor, Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN at the Thematic Debate of the First Committee on Outer Space during the 69th Session of UNGA on 27 October 2014

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

1. Bangladesh aligns itself with the NAM statement made by Indonesia in this cluster. I would like to make the following points in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

2. It has long been established that the outer space is a common heritage and province of all mankind and must be explored and utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of present and future generations of all peoples.

3. Space is no longer an exclusive preserve of a few developed States. Today developing countries are also tapping into space technology in diverse areas. Their reliance on space assets and their applications will only grow in the coming days. The benefits of a peaceful and predictable space environment are therefore clearly evident.

Mr. Chairman,

4. With increasing human activities in outer space, the risks of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space are on the rise. But it is in the common interests of all countries to ensure peaceful uses of outer space. Alarmed at the prospect of weaponization in outer space, successive sessions of the General Assembly have adopted resolutions calling for negotiation on a legally-binding international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Bangladesh believes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including a ban to deploy or use weapons therein, can avert a grave danger for international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Like many other states, Bangladesh is concerned about the pressing problem of space debris, which threatens all nations’ space-related activities. The proliferation of space debris for a long period of time constitutes a serious and imminent threat. There is an urgent need to develop appropriate norms against the creation of further space debris, whether by accidental or deliberate actions. We also believe that the responsibility of clearing the space debris primarily rests with those states whose actions have created such debris in the first place.
Mr. Chairman,

6. Bangladesh has always attached great importance to transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) with regard to use of outer space. We believe that appropriate and viable TCBMs are conducive to enhancing mutual trust, reducing misperceptions, regulating outer space activities and maintaining outer space security. In this regard, we appreciate the EU’s efforts to promote a draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities (ICOC). But we hold that the ICOC, as a voluntary outer space TCBM, should focus on peaceful uses of outer space, and should by no means dilute the work on PAROS in the CD. Such measures are complementary to a legally-binding international instrument that would take into account all the complexities and different perspectives of space security.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

7. We hold that the “draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects” tabled in the CD by China and the Russian Federation in 2008 may be the most viable basis for talks to begin on a legally binding instrument. In view of the rapidly advancing space technologies of today and the dangers that may arise if these technologies go unregulated, it would be in the interest of all countries—those with technologically advanced space programs and those with no space programs—to come to a legally binding agreement that prevents the weaponization of outer space. We hope that the negotiation for such an agreement would soon commence in the CD.

I thank you Mr. Chairman,