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## Multilateral Negotiations on an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities

Remarks by Non-Governmental Organizations  
**Statement by Secure World Foundation**  
Wednesday, 29 July 2015

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, the Secure World Foundation appreciates this opportunity to give its statement at the Multilateral Negotiations on an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. The Secure World Foundation is dedicated to maintaining the secure and sustainable use of space for the benefit of Earth and all of its peoples. We strongly believe that the challenges of sustaining the space environment into the future must be met in a truly international and cooperative manner.

The long-term sustainability of space faces many challenges. The growth of orbital debris, crowding of critical orbits and of the radiofrequency spectrum, and increased chances of space assets being part of a future conflict on Earth may hinder our ability to continue to use space for benefits in the future. Establishing best practices and norms of responsible behavior for space activities is an essential step towards mitigating these threats and ensuring the long-term sustainability of space. Realizing that any sustainable actions in the space environment require international coordination and mutual trust, we encourage delegations to reflect on their long-term interests in space sustainability.

The Code of Conduct is an excellent start to the conversation on what the international community believes to be responsible use of space. With the growing numbers of state and non-state actors in space, a well-defined and broadly accepted set of norms and best practices can help mitigate mishaps and mistakes. They can also help identify irresponsible behavior in space. This is particularly important in times of crises or heightened tensions, as acting outside of a norm could lead to unintended escalation and conflict. Benefits to norms of behavior include the ability to use the shared norm to build relationships and establishing common understanding on an issue to build momentum for future cooperation or agreement. Furthermore, norms allow for discussion of difficult issues without the pressure of needing to reach a legally binding conclusion.

Voluntary norms or best practices are regularly developed out of self-interest and are stronger when they are perceived as being legitimate, in that they appear to be both reasonable and credibly enforced. The Code of Conduct's effectiveness for improving space security and sustainability will depend upon its legitimacy. This legitimacy will depend on whether states

perceive it as truly capturing the norms and best practices that are in everyone's best interests. Hence, it is important to use the present negotiating process to build consensus on those rules of the road.

It is important to keep in mind that the Code of Conduct is one of three interrelated international efforts to enhance space stability and sustainability. The second initiative is the UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space's Working Group on the Long Term Sustainability of Space Activities, and the third is the implementation of the recent recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts' report on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. These initiatives, when taken as a whole, show themselves to be complementary and not competitive; furthermore, they take different yet equally important paths toward the goal of maintaining our collective ability to derive benefits from space over the long-term.

Mr. Chairman, the discussions that have been part of all three of these initiatives have been crucial in overall framing of how the international community views responsible space behavior. By participating in these efforts, countries demonstrate a recognition of the importance of an international approach to this issue with global consequences, as well as their good intentions for their space programs. And whether or not explicit reference to other sources of international law is made in the final text of this Code of Conduct, this document should complement and indeed augment the existing body of space laws, rules, and norms of behavior. It should be noted that the Code being sought should be useful, with the understanding that it is being worked on in the context of other initiatives. A useful Code will facilitate access to space for all states, newcomers and current spacefarers alike. Finally, whatever document comes out of these discussions should recognize that space sustainability is required to ensure that space-enabled services remain available to all states.

As the benefits of space activities expand in number and improve in quality, keeping outer space available for peaceful activities will become ever more important, as will our continued ability to use space capabilities to help solve our most pressing challenges here on Earth. Thank you for your time.