



Opening remarks by Mr. Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
to the Conference

**Space Security Conference 2011:
Building on the Past, Stepping Towards the Future**

as prepared, check against delivery

Event organized by the
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
in cooperation with
Secure World Foundation

Room VIII

Palais des Nations, Geneva

Monday, 4 April 2011

**Ms. Hitchens,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I welcome the participants of the UNIDIR Conference.

Next week, on 12 April 2011, the international community will celebrate a special memorable occasion – the 50th Anniversary of the first manned flight in outer space by the Soviet cosmonaut Yury Gagarin. This event turned a new page in the history of civilization by opening space for exploration.

Today, outer space has become indispensable for our everyday life. This includes telecommunications, navigation, banking transactions, agricultural planning and natural resource protection. Weather forecasts, early warnings on size and frequency of extreme events, floods and other natural hazards are all tracked by space systems. When addressing issues related to climate change, space technologies

are of critical importance in monitoring the pace and extent of global warming. With this in mind more than ever before there is an urgent need to keep it peaceful. All States have equal and inalienable rights to access to outer space, its research and use. And it is natural that space security should be our common goal and we should join our efforts to find a solution that would consolidate international security and stability.

Weaponization of outer space would trigger unpredictable consequences for the international community – similar to those at the advent of the nuclear era. Despite the existence of quite a few legal regimes and agreements in this field, they are unable to effectively prevent the placement of weapons, which are not weapons of mass destruction, and consequently, avert an arms race in outer space. Moreover, weapons deployment in outer space by one state

will inevitably result in a chain reaction. And this, in turn, is endangered with a new spiral of the arms race both in outer space and on earth.

Prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) is considered as one of the four core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. It was included in all the proposals for the Programme of Work of the Conference. There is a growing demand in the international community to take concrete measures to strengthen space security.

Lately, we saw a number of different proposals with a view of adopting preventive measures against the emergence of new high-tech destabilizing types of weapons and thus creating a new area of confrontation.

In 2008, Russia and China officially submitted at the Conference on Disarmament, the draft of the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, and of the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects. Draft PPWT provides a good basis for substantial discussions at the CD on PAROS leading to eventual negotiations on this pertinent issue. The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 65/68, which emphasized the need for transparency and confidence-building measures.

I hope that this conference will contribute to the thorough and balanced discussion of all initiatives and will help to promote the issue of space security at the Conference on Disarmament.

Thank you for your attention.