Statement by Mr. D.B. Venkatesh Varma, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament

at the CD’s Informal Plenary on Agenda item 3 on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)

June 11, 2014

Mr. Coordinator,

It is a pleasure to be participating in these informal structured discussions on PAROS under your able coordinator ship. We congratulate you and convey our appreciation for the work paper that you have circulated

2. We welcome the opportunity for the Conference to discuss the issue of PAROS, one of the core issues on the CD’s agenda. India had joined as cosponsor on the UNGA resolution 68/29 on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. India also joined the G21 working paper in CD 1941 submitted to the Conference in 2013.

Mr. Coordinator,

3. Over the past five decades India has emerged as a major space faring nation. India’s space programme has developmental and security dimensions. We have a well-established and highly successful space launch vehicle programme and international cooperation with a large number of countries. We have sent a space craft to the Moon; another space craft is already half way on its journey to Mars.

4. India believes that Outer Space should not become an arena of conflict, but a new and expanding frontier of cooperative activity. This places a responsibility on all space-faring nations to contribute to international efforts to safeguard outer space as the common heritage of humankind and preserve and promote the benefits flowing from advances made in space technology and its applications for all. We are against the weaponization of Outer Space and support international efforts to reinforce safety and security of space based assets.

5. India is party to all the major international treaties relating to Outer Space. We believe that this international legal framework needs to be strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and to prevent the weaponization of Outer Space.

6. While universal and nondiscriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, they cannot substitute for legally binding instruments in this field. India is participating actively in discussions being led by the EU on a draft International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities. We believe that by ensuring the right process and inclusive participation it would be possible also to ensure the right product of universal acceptance.

7. India is prepared to give consideration to the revised PPWT presented by Russia and China as a contribution to the various proposals for negotiating a legally binding instrument in the CD.

8. Though India supported resolution 68/50 on TCBMs, it is unfortunate that a major space faring country like India was not included in the GGE on TCBMs. In our view a more representative GGE could have enhanced the content of the report.

9. India supports the substantive consideration of the issue of PAROS in the CD where it has been on the agenda since 1982, including *inter alia* negotiations in a subsidiary body as part of a Programme of Work. In our discussions we need to focus on what the CD could usefully do in addressing the multiple threats relating to Outer Space. Member states should be given the incentive to protect their interests by investing in legally binding multilateral instruments rather than resort to national measures in ensuring that space remains peaceful and outside the bounds of armed conflict. We believe that the CD has a vital role in ensuring such an outcome.

Thank you.