

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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**LETTER DATED 14 AUGUST 2009 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING UPDATED PROPOSALS BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION RELATING TO THE REPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON “TRANSPARENCY AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES IN OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES”, PREPARED IN PURSUANCE OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 63/68**

I have the honour to forward a paper in Russian entitled “Updated proposals by the Russian Federation relating to the report by the United Nations Secretary-General on ‘Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities’, prepared in pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/68”.

I would be grateful if you would issue and distribute this letter and the attached paper as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

*(Signed):* Valery Loshchinin  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the  
Russian Federation to the Conference  
on Disarmament

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\* Reissued for technical reasons.

**UPDATED PROPOSALS BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION RELATING TO THE REPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON “TRANSPARENCY AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES IN OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES”, PREPARED IN PURSUANCE OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 63/68**

1. The Russian Federation considers that confidence-building measures help to ensure peace, security and stability at all levels, to eliminate possible threats and overcome challenges to peace and security, and to prevent military confrontation, while facilitating the management of situations that could lead to international tension. They make a significant contribution to improving inter-State relations and the development of dialogue and cooperation between countries.
2. Transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space activities, in view of the growing dependence of all countries in the world on the outcome of such activities, are an important component of confidence-building measures, which also include measures on land, at sea and in the air, and are intended to achieve similar aims. Their role is to help prevent the emergence of outer space as a new sphere of confrontation, to avert a new nuclear arms race and to establish conditions for establishing a predictable strategic situation in outer space, the security of outer space activities and the protection of space assets. These measures could become a significant field for broad multilateral cooperation.
3. A number of TCBMs in outer space activities are already included in international agreements on outer space: the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968 Astronauts Rescue Agreement, the 1972 Liability Convention and the 1975 Registration Convention. Some of these measures are applied by States as a unilateral initiative and constitute political obligations.
4. TCBMs are not, however, all-embracing in terms either of their coverage of the various types of outer space activity or of the participation of States in their implementation. Joint work is needed on additional measures in this area that are appropriate to the current stage of development of humanity.
5. In this work it would be useful to consider the results of the study on the application of confidence-building measures in outer space that was conducted by a group of governmental experts over the period 1990-1993 (included in the report by the United Nations Secretary-General contained in document A/48/305), and also other related proposals introduced by States, including some proposals in connection with General Assembly resolutions 61/75, 62/43 and 63/68.
6. In order to conduct a more in-depth study of issues relating to TCBMs and the preparation of recommendations for further work in this area, it would be useful to establish a United Nations group of governmental experts with the appropriate mandate.
7. The Russian Federation would like to draw the attention of the international community to a number of negative events in the course of space activities, such as the collision of Russian and American spacecraft on 10 February 2009 and the near-collision of a number of space objects and space debris with the International Space Station. These events demonstrate the importance of forecasting dangerous space incidents and providing early warning.

8. The Russian Federation would like to add the following to the package of possible TCBMs it put forward earlier: exchange of information on dangerous situations forecast in outer space. This measure is aimed at preventing or minimizing the consequences of dangerous incidents in outer space. The measure would be implemented through the provision of information to the countries and international space organizations concerned on the situation in outer space, as well as dangerous events forecast over a certain period of time, such as near-collisions and collisions with space objects, their uncontrolled de-orbiting, and planned manoeuvres by space objects. Such information would be provided through the relevant information exchange mechanism in the agreed volume and format, and could be adjusted at short notice if necessary.

9. The Russian Federation's updated proposals in relation to possible TCBMs, which are both relevant and forward-looking, are set out below. This list of TCBMs is not exhaustive but could, in our opinion, serve as a basis for further discussion.

10. Possible TCBMs fall into several categories:

- Measures aimed at enhancing the transparency of outer space programmes
- Measures aimed at expanding the information available on outer space objects in orbit
- Measures related to the rules of conduct for outer space activities

11. Such measures may be carried out in various ways, including the exchange of information, familiarization visits, notifications, consultations and thematic workshops:

(a) Exchange of information on:

- (i) The main directions of States' policies on outer space activities;
- (ii) Major outer space research and use programmes;
- (iii) The orbital parameters of outer space objects;
- (iv) Dangerous situations forecast in outer space;

(b) Familiarization visits:

- (i) Expert visits, including visits to space launch sites, flight command and control centres and other facilities of outer space infrastructure;
- (ii) Invitation of observers to launches of spacecraft;
- (iii) Demonstrations of rocket and space equipment;

(c) Notification of:

- (i) Planned spacecraft launches;

- (ii) Scheduled spacecraft manoeuvres which could result in dangerous proximity to spacecraft of other States;
  - (iii) The beginning of descent from orbit of unguided space objects and the predicted impact areas on earth;
  - (iv) The return of a guided spacecraft from orbit into the atmosphere;
  - (v) The return of a spacecraft with a nuclear power source on board, in the event of malfunction and danger that radioactive material will fall to earth;
- (d) Consultations:
- (i) To clarify the information provided on outer space research and use programmes;
  - (ii) On ambiguous situations, as well as on other issues of concern;
  - (iii) To discuss the implementation of agreed transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities;
- (e) Thematic workshops on various outer space research and use issues, organized on a bilateral or multilateral basis, with the participation of scientists, diplomats and military and technical experts.

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