



**Keynote address to the UNIDIR
Space Conference**

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Mr. Jarmo Sareva,
Dr. Michael Simpson, Executive Director, Secure World Foundation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to UNIDIR, the Secure World Foundation and the Simons Foundation for the invitation to address this important gathering.

These annual conferences convened by UNIDIR have become a key standing forum for facilitating international dialogue on outer space security.

The title of this year's conference, "sustaining the momentum", is a precise reflection on the current situation within the United Nations on outer space security.

In this connection, I wish to highlight three major trends and developments.

First, there is growing unity between the three largest space-faring nations on measures to create mutual understanding and trust, as well as to reduce misperceptions and miscalculations.

Such measures are increasingly necessary to prevent military confrontation and to ensure regional and global stability. They should also contribute to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This common vision has been achieved, even as the existing disarmament machinery has remained deadlocked and the gap has widened on the future of nuclear disarmament.

The unity among China, the Russian Federation and the United States forms the basis of a set of concentric circles of political support needed to implement transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs). The stronger this unity becomes, the better it augurs for advancing outer space security.

Second, there is common interest in elevating this unity to all States. Outer space is not just a domain for a few advanced nations. It is a common province, whose use and exploration must remain for the benefit of all. Therefore, measures for outer space security are the concern of the entire international community.

This is why the General Assembly decided to refer the 2013 report of the group of governmental experts to all three bodies that deal with outer space and disarmament, peace and security: the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

The General Assembly itself has also worked to build momentum. In October last year, the First and Fourth Committees held their first ever joint ad hoc meeting. Its topic was on addressing the challenges of outer space security and sustainability.

That meeting proved useful but ultimately revealed that further dialogue is needed.

Third, The United Nations system has a key role to play in sustaining and building upon the current momentum. We, at the Secretariat, need to work together better.

My office, the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) has increased and strengthened its cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA). Together, we are working to

improve coordination within the United Nations system on facilitating the efforts of States to implement the conclusions, recommendations and measures contained in the 2013 report of the group of governmental experts.

ODA recently joined as a full member of UN-SPACE, which is comprised of all UN entities involved in outer space. We have coordinated closely with OOSA on the preparation of the special report by UN-SPACE on the implementation of the TCBMs. We also look forward to deepening this cooperation as we prepare the report by the Secretary-General in 2017 as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution on outer space TCBMs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, on the way forward, I have two points.

First, all States should recognize the importance of outer space security to the achievement of broader international peace and disarmament objectives.

In recent years, the international community has faced new concerns over the lack of progress on nuclear arms reductions, regional disputes, non-proliferation crises and attempts by terrorists to acquire and use chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials.

These challenges are steadily converging. We face a growing nexus between emerging technologies, such as cyber capabilities, and the vulnerability of critical infrastructure. Outer space is a critical link in this nexus.

The potential disruption of space-based assets and related ground-based infrastructure could have grave implications if this were to occur during a crisis. TCBMs provide one possible solution to these concerns. They can also serve as a platform for the exploration of more ambitious measures to ensure peace and security in outer space.

Second, more dialogue is needed in all forums where outer space security is raised.

We must ensure that the joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly is not a one-time event. This unique forum brought together for the first time both sides of the policy community – peaceful uses and international security. While in Vienna earlier this week, I was pleased to hear that COPUOS agreed to recommend another joint meeting for next year.

The Disarmament Commission can play a pragmatic role by recommending how Member States should implement TCBMs.

I very much welcome the agreement by China, Russia and the United States on a topic aimed at producing recommendations to promote the practical implementation of TCBMs with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space. As I said at the beginning, this unity among the major space-faring nations is very much welcome. It is vitally important to strategic security and linked to the future of disarmament.

It is encouraging that no State explicitly opposed an agenda item on outer space within the UNDC, as suggested by these three countries. I welcome the support within the Commission for the Chair to find a way to carry forward this item without prejudice to the deliberations on the existing agenda items.

Successful deliberations on outer space in the UNDC could demonstrate that the United Nations disarmament machinery can produce concrete results. Consideration of outer space could also help the Commission to move more constructively on the two other long-standing items.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Earlier this year, we commemorated the 55th anniversary of the historic flight by Yuri Gagarin. In commemorating the first International Day of Human Spaceflight, the Secretary-General said that these achievements “remind us of our common humanity and our need to work together to conquer shared challenges.”

In this same spirit, I hope we will take resolute steps this year and beyond to conquer the challenge of ensuring peace and long-term sustainability in outer space.

Thank you.