Statement by Mr. Vipul, Counsellor (Disarmament), PMI to CD, on PAROS in the CD Plenary, March 19, 2013

Mr. President,

The Indian delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of CD's presidency. You can count on India's full support in your efforts for the commencement of substantive work in the Conference. We appreciate the scheduling of this plenary for discussing PAROS which provides an opportunity for delegations to update each other on developments on this core issue of the CD.

Mr. President.

For the past five decades the Indian space programme has been a pioneer in harnessing outer space for peaceful uses. Space science and technology has played a vital role in socio-economic development of our people. Given our substantial national investments in outer space and proliferation of space-related technologies and assets as well as the growing militarization of space, we accord priority to the issue of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, including the safety of assets in space.

Outer Space should not become an arena of competitive policies, 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 and to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space.

The current international legal framework on outer space was devised at the dawn of the space age more than three decades ago. Outer space has become more crowded and congested since then and technological developments continue to add to the complexity of the issues involved. We therefore believe that the international legal framework on space security needs to be strengthened to enhance the security of space assets for all space users and to prevent the weaponization of outer space. While universal and non-discriminatory transparency and confidence-building measures can play a useful complementary role, and indeed India is participating in efforts led by, among others, the EU in this regard, they cannot substitute legally binding instruments in this field.

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. Once that happens, there are a number of proposals, including for a draft treaty, which may be considered further.

We look forward to the briefing/statement of the Chair of the GGE on TCBMs in Outer Space, Mr. Victor Vasiliev, about the work of the GGE, where unfortunately not all major space-faring nations are represented.

Thank you.