

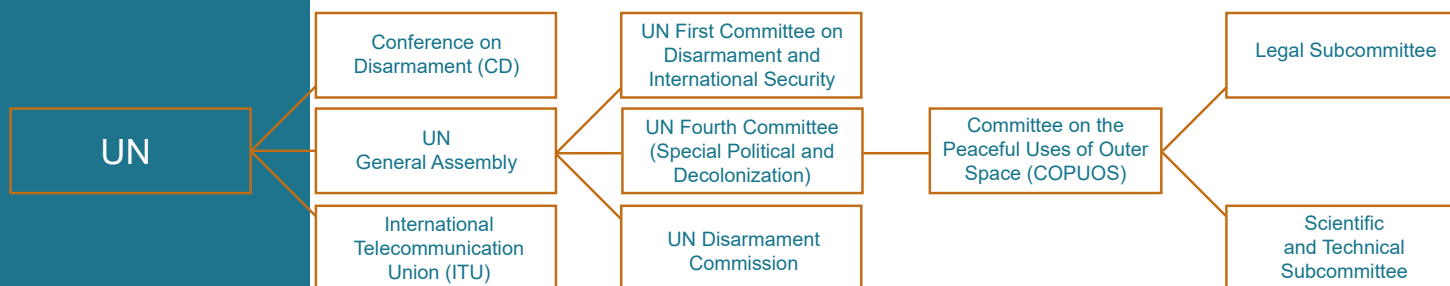
SPACE SECURITY AND THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

APRIL 2020



ABOUT

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is one of several bodies associated with the United Nations (UN) that share responsibility for protecting the security of outer space.

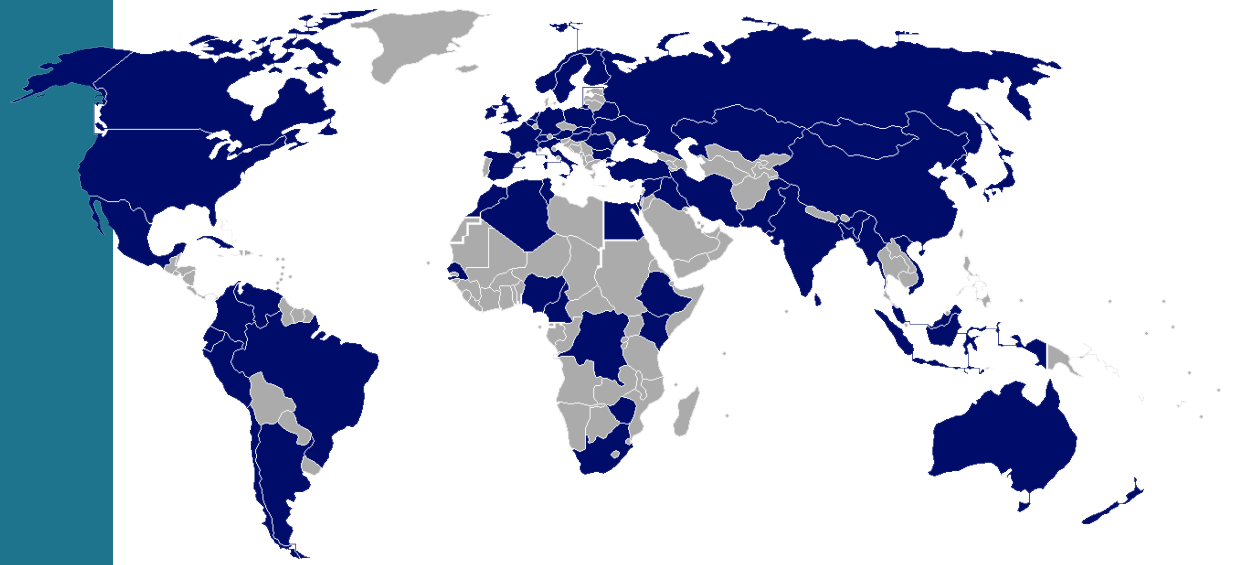


In 1979, the CD became the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum of the international community, as determined at the first special session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) devoted to disarmament in late 1978.



For more than 35 years, the CD has repeatedly attempted to address the issue of the **weaponization of outer space**.

While technically an independent body, the CD works very closely with the UN: its secretary is appointed by the UN Secretary-General and it must consider recommendations for its agenda from the General Assembly, to which it submits reports at least annually. The CD meets on UN premises at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, and is serviced by UN personnel.



MEMBERSHIP

The CD currently has 65 members. They include 17 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (one of which is Canada), all nuclear-weapon states, as well as all the permanent members (P5) and six of the 10 elected members of the UN Security Council. All members of the CD are UN member states.



HOW IT WORKS

The CD, which meets for three sessions in a normal year, works by consensus under a rotating presidency. Canada is scheduled to be one of 5 rotating presidents at the CD in 2021.

Its current agenda includes the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS); effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon states that they will not be subject to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, including radiological weapons; a comprehensive program of disarmament and transparency related to armaments.

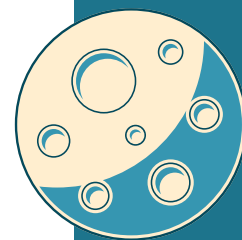
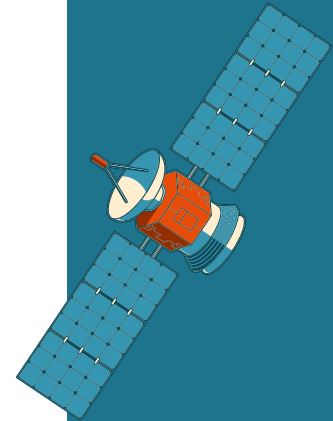
The CD successfully concluded negotiations of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (1992) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) (1996).

The difficulty in achieving consensus has meant that the CD has been at a virtual standstill since 1996, failing to adopt an agenda or program of work every year since, except in 2009 and 2016.

OUTER SPACE AT THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Issues related to the weaponization of outer space have been on the CD agenda since 1985. Although the Outer Space Treaty prohibits military activities and installations on the Moon and other celestial bodies, and the orbiting of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space, it does not expressly prohibit the placement or use of conventional weapons in space, or ground-based anti-satellite weapons.

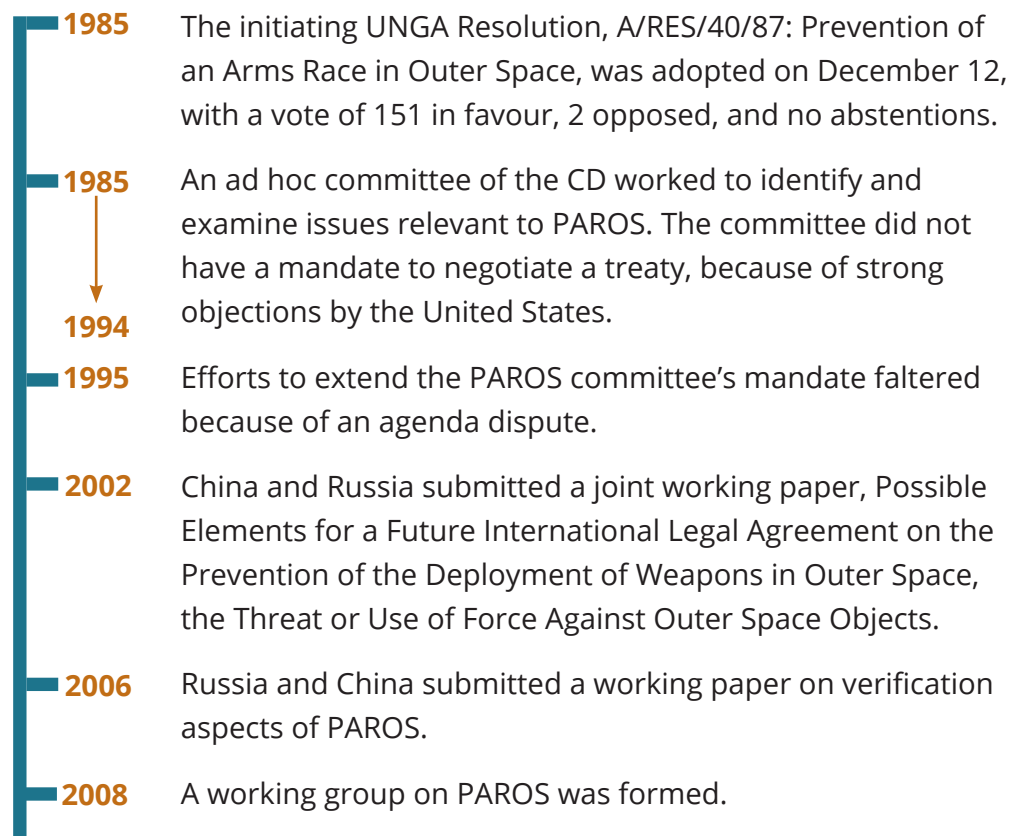
Following is information on the two most significant CD initiatives related to outer space. Both stem from ongoing resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly and First Committee. Both initiatives remain ongoing.



PAROS:

In response to perceived gaps in arms control in the Outer Space Treaty, an ad hoc committee on PAROS was established in 1985 to identify and examine relevant issues such as the legal protection of satellites, nuclear power systems in space, and various confidence-building measures. It was strongly opposed by the United States, which preferred to negotiate bilaterally with what was then the Soviet Union. At the UNGA, PAROS has continued to receive nearly unanimous support every year since.

PAROS TIMELINE:



2008 Russia and China introduced a draft a treaty “Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force Against Outer Space Objects” (PPWT).

2009 Canada introduced the paper, The Merits of Certain Draft Transparency and Confidence Building Measures and Treaty Proposals for Space Security.

2011 The European Union presented a draft Code of Conduct for outer space activities, which would provide guidelines to limit harmful interference, collision, or accidents in outer space. This initiative was eventually pursued outside of the UN framework, where it failed.

2013 The CD established the working body “Prevention of an arms race in outer space” to discuss substantively and without limitation all issues related to an arms race in outer space.

2014 Russia reintroduced a revised draft treat “Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects” (PPWT)

2016 Malaysia presented a new working paper on PAROS on behalf of a group of member states.

2017 European Union Member States issued a statement to the CD Working Group on the “Way Ahead” that proposed a multilateral, non-legally binding instrument on space security.


2018 In response to persistent deadlock and the inability to adopt a formal agenda, CD members established five subsidiary bodies in which to conduct substantive discussions on agenda items. Subsidiary Body 3 focused on prevention of an arms race in outer space. The bodies were not subsequently re-established.

2020 In its opening statement in January, Canada recommended modest measures that could advance PAROS. For example, Canada suggested that the CD embark on discussions on specific measures, such as negotiating an end to anti-satellite (ASAT) tests that cause space debris.

PPWT:

In support of PAROS, China and Russia have been pursuing an initiative to ban weapons in outer space, known as PPWT – the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects. Members of the CD are strongly divided on this initiative; this division carries over to annual resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and First Committee.

PPWT TIMELINE:

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- 2002** China and Russia submitted a working paper on a treaty on the Prevention of Placement of Weapons in Outer Space.
 - 2006** China and Russia jointly submitted four working papers.
 - 2008** Russia and China submitted a draft version of the PPWT. It was strongly opposed by the United States. The draft treaty was repeatedly brought forward by Russia in subsequent years.
 - 2009** A working paper that responded to questions was presented.
 - 2011** Nigeria presented working paper CD/1965, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space to the CD on behalf of a group of members. The working paper recommended the draft PPWT as a starting point for a PAROS treaty.
 - 2014** China and Russia submitted an updated draft of the working paper that presented the draft treaty.

RESOURCES

United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Conference on Disarmament, <https://www.unog.ch/cd>.

The first place to go for primary documents and basic facts on the CD.

Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), "Conference on Disarmament," <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/conference-on-disarmament>

A detailed chronology.

Péricles Gasparini Alves, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), *Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space: A Guide to the Discussions in the Conference on Disarmament*, 1991, <https://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/prevention-of-an-arms-race-in-outer-space-a-guide-to-the-discussions-in-the-cd-en-451.pdf>.

Great for detailed background, but out-of-date.

Louis de Gouyon Matignon, "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space," 2019, Space Legal Issues, <https://www.spacelegalissues.com/treaty-on-the-prevention-of-the-placement-of-weapons-in-outer-space-the-threat-or-use-of-force-against-outer-space-objects>.

Draft of PPWT, in context.

Secure World Foundation, *Conference on Disarmament*, Fact Sheet, 2009, https://swfound.org/media/1794/cd_factsheet.pdf.

Good detail, but not current.



www.spacesecurityindex.org