

**Statement at the Space Security Conference
2-3 April 2013
By: Mohamed Hatem Elatawy
Counsellor, Officer in Charge of Disarmament
Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations and Other
International Organizations in Geneva**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

First of all, let me reiterate that the following remarks are my own and may not necessarily fully reflect the position Egypt may take on any issue.

Since this conference is on space, I will spare the audience the typical reflection on the importance of space in everyday life. It is sufficient to say that space applications are nowadays more prevalent and far-reaching than at any earlier time.

I will thus restrict my presentation to three elements: One Reviewing the overall objectives of the Egyptian Space Program and outline its plans in this field; Two discussing threats potentially facing the Egyptian Space Program, and Three discussing possible approaches to mitigate threats to the space environment.

First the Egyptian Space Program:

Despite starting early in Egypt with our own space program, yet modest results had been achieved so far. The Egyptian space program in fact started in the nineteen fifties but it wasn't until the establishment of the Egyptian Space Council in 1998 and the approval of a year later in 1999 of the Egyptian Space Program within the National Authority of Remote Sensing and Space Sciences that this program received the boost that it needed.

The objectives of the Egyptian space program is

- To Introduce Egypt to the Space Age by the gradual design and manufacturing of remote sensing and small satellites for scientific research
- To transfer technology of design and manufacturing of small satellites to Egypt and to drive innovation in earth observations and space sciences.
- To establish a scientific and technological base for space and high technology industries in Egypt and the development of the relevant human capacity and improve local stakeholders in remote sensing applications.
- To support decision makers in sustainable development by providing space images.

To undertake the above objectives, Egypt has started a process for building small satellites for remote sensing that would not only build and launch the satellite themselves but would also transfer the relevant technology. In 2001 it has commissioned YSDO in the Ukraine to design and develop Egypt's first remote sensing satellite EgyptSat-1 or MisrSat-1 while providing technical expertise and on-the-job training for Egyptian personnel as well as technology transfer. This process extended

from 2002-2007 when on April 17th 2007 the satellite was launched. Based on the design of the first satellite, Egypt planned to undertake modifications on the design to build the second Egyptian satellite MisrSat-2 with the aim of establishing a base for know-how and technology with multisource technical assistance. This became all the more crucial with the loss of communication with the EgyptSat-1 on July 19th 2010. The work for MisrSat-2 was envisaged to span the period 2012- 2015. This is scheduled to be followed by the third Egyptian satellite – DesertSat – with an Egyptian design and manufacturing and with very limited non-native assistance, with the design and manufacturing phase scheduled for the period 2014-2017. The whole satellite project is to be supported by the establishment of control and receiving stations (two stations are already established in Cairo and Aswan). Of course, the program is facing some difficulties at the moment, including a not-so-conducive economic environment. But there is still strong commitment to the Egyptian space program.

Second Challenges facing the utilization of Outer Space:

As a late comer to outer space, Egypt has to deal with an environment that is already being clogged with active satellites and space debris. Indeed, the usable margin of outer space is shrinking with every launch. This poses a serious threat not only to Egypt but to other emerging and potential space users, let alone to already established space users. This is a truly a global phenomenon that needs to be dealt with collectively.

Another threat that is threatening the full and peaceful utilization of outer space is the ever-present threat of an arms race in outer space. Given the nature of outer space and the reliance of the whole world community on the benefits driven from it, outer space must always be treated as a common heritage of humankind. As such, outer space must be preserved as a zone outside international conflict, for if a conflict would ever there every country stands to lose whether they were party to the conflict or not. And history has shown us that the best way to avoid such threat from occurring is to stop the eventuality of using weapons in outer space or developing weapons that would target outer space and/or celestial bodies. This is the importance of debate on the prevention of arms race in outer space as we have seen over and over again that it is much easier to stop something from occurring rather than trying to roll it back after the fact.

Third Way Forward: