

**United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research  
(UNIDIR)**

DINNER EVENT

*Bangkok, Thailand  
21 November 2013*

During the second round of consultations regarding the European Union's proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, held in Bangkok, Thailand, UNIDIR hosted a dinner event on 21 November 2013, entitled *Space Security Challenges for Emerging Space Actors*. The purpose of this event was to highlight the perspectives on outer space security of emerging space actors, whose rapid growth is fundamentally changing the conduct of activities in outer space. In light of current multilateral initiatives aimed at strengthening stability and security in outer space, it is critical that these actors participate in the ongoing development of legal and political tools that will have a direct impact on the way space activities take shape in the coming years.

Mr. Ben Baseley-Walker, Programme Lead for the Emerging Security Threats Programme at UNIDIR, drew attention to the many ways in which space-based services affect our daily lives, often going unnoticed until the service is interrupted. He noted that the stability of the space domain will have significant impacts on Earth in the near future and it is increasingly necessary to explore options for strengthening safety and security. For this reason, UNIDIR is carrying out the project *Facilitating the Process for the Development of an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities*, to encourage dialogue on the multilateral initiative to establish non-binding rules of the road for outer space activities.

Mr. Cherdkiat Atthakor, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Organizations of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the participants. He noted the particular importance that his government places on space capabilities, as do other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. In this context, Thailand and many other states support the active participation of emerging space actors in the ongoing dialogue to establish new guidelines for ensuring the long-term sustainability of space activities.

Mr. Fermín Romero Vázquez, External Consultant for the Mexican Space Agency, focused on the role and opportunities for developing countries in outer space by asking two questions—why states invest in space, and what space security means to developing countries. First, he analysed why developing countries are investing heavily in space activities given other pressing social issues such as poverty and hunger. According to Romero Vázquez, the rising powers in space, such as India, have demonstrated the socioeconomic utility of developing space capabilities. As a result, states such as Mexico, Nigeria, and Thailand are seeking to develop space-based services in order to tackle other national priorities. Second, space security threats, such as space debris and the increased crowding of orbital resources, have proven to affect all space actors, not just established space powers. In this context, developing countries have sought to advance multilateral efforts to develop an international regime for the conduct of space activities. Romero Vázquez highlighted the need for international cooperation in developing multilateral tools for space security challenges and stressed the importance of accounting for the needs of developing countries, which are tomorrow's emerging space actors. He recommended that all states should contribute to the review of the EU's proposed International Code of Conduct for Space Activities in order to pave the way for diplomatic negotiations.

Dr. Abdul-Hakim Elwaer, Director of the Department of Human Resources, Science, and Technology of the African Union Commission, discussed the numerous ways that states in Africa are becoming space actors. He noted that efforts to develop African space

capabilities are driven by the African Union vision, namely to develop “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”. In this context, efforts are being made to develop innovative space solutions to Africa’s challenges. He drew attention to the space programmes of Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa, which have become notable space actors. He also highlighted the valuable role that international cooperation has played in developing regional space capabilities, such as the African Resources and Environmental Management Satellite Constellation Initiative, the Disaster Monitoring Constellation, and the Square Kilometer Array. He suggested that the current international legal regime is not sufficient to address growing space security concerns stemming from the rapid rise in the amount of space activities. In order to ensure the continued accessibility of space for all states, particularly emerging space actors, Elwaer recommended the adoption of a statutory regime. He commended the efforts of the international community regarding the proposed International Code of Conduct for Space Activities and encouraged participation by emerging space actors in its development, especially African states.

Finally, Mrs. Beatrice Fihn, Manager of Reaching Critical Will, spoke of outer space as a global commons where the actions of any single player can have severe negative implications for all. She stated that it is the responsibility of the international policymaking community as a whole to deal with outer space security threats as part of the overall global security picture. Fihn noted that in previous international negotiations it had proven useful to focus discussions on the consequences of behaviours rather than on strategic motives. She stated that such an approach had been particularly useful in reaching a wider audience of stakeholders, which for outer space activities includes international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the commercial space sector. In this context, she stressed the value of regional outreach as a means of promoting dialogue on space security issues, particularly between regional space powers and states with emerging space capabilities. She pointed out that the current multilateral initiatives on space security are particularly useful not only in the development of an international regime for space activities, but as transparency and confidence-building measures in themselves. She regarded the current initiatives as good first steps in addressing space security threats.

Throughout this event, the speakers stressed that outer space has become a critical component of socioeconomic and strategic national policies for states of all levels of technological and economic development. For this reason, it is critical that emerging space actors engage in the consultations and negotiations for the development of an international regime for space activities.