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FOREWORD

Outer space is an essential resource for all of us, whether we come from developed or developing nations, and must be kept free from attack for the whole of humankind. Imagine now a world without satellite communications, without mobile phone networks, weather forecasting and environmental imaging and you are imagining a world that has not prevented a war in outer space.

With this in mind, as part of the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament to discuss the prevention of an arms race in outer space, UNIDIR has been holding annual meetings to discuss space security. The conference “Security in Space: The Next Generation” is the seventh such conference and these are the proceedings from that day and a half of intensive discussion with experts from all over the world on this urgent security issue.

UNIDIR’s conferences since 2002 have each in turn had a different emphasis: connecting outer space and global security, detailing the nexus between security and the peaceful uses of outer space, preventing an arms race in outer space, building the architecture for sustainable space security, celebrating the Outer Space Treaty, and exploring cooperative approaches to space security.

The 2008 conference took a prospective approach, giving a voice to the new generation of scientists and political analysts looking at the issue of space security. Building on the theme of the “Next Generation”, we also discussed the new technologies for space weaponization and for the prevention of weaponization, and the prospects of legal and other instruments that could be developed to increase security in outer space. In particular, participants discussed the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, newly tabled in February 2008 by China and Russia. Participants also looked at ways to build trust in space activities in the future, as well as thinking on how to move from confrontation to cooperation as a way to increase space security and improve access to outer space for peaceful activities. Confidence-building measures, solving technical issues such as debris, enhanced cooperation for peaceful uses and international legally

binding instruments are important mechanisms by which to guarantee a secure and stable space environment, for the benefit of all.

On a personal note, I leave UNIDIR in mid-2008 and I am proud of the work UNIDIR has done to create ideas for peace and security since I became Director in 1997. I am particularly proud of this series of conferences and their proceedings. It has not been easy to create a safe space for discussion on what has proven to be a hotly contested issue in the Conference on Disarmament. Nobody wants a war in outer space, but steps to avoid such a catastrophe range from treaties to prevent weaponization and build trust, to arming even commercial satellites in order to defend against attack and thus preparing for worst-case scenarios. In creating an annual discussion in Geneva, bringing experts from academia, government, the commercial sector and the military, we have enabled the negotiators at the Conference on Disarmament to explore and understand the variety of problems and the range of solutions with respect to outer space security. In publishing the proceedings (the summary of which is published annually as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament), we are reaching out to a wider audience beyond Geneva. This year we have made a specific effort to involve the Next Generation, the voices of those who will inherit the effects of the decisions we make today. It is our hope that our wide-ranging, provocative discussions in Geneva will contribute to the global efforts to create a secure outer space for all.

Patricia Lewis
Director
UNIDIR

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