

Statement by Denmark

First of all I would like to thank the delegation of the United States and the Chairmanship of Croatia for arranging this review conference. The Open Skies Treaty is one of the most successful Confidence and Security Building Measures we have and Denmark has supported the regime since its birth in the early nineties.

The purpose of the Treaty has been challenged since then with arguments that satellites and other sources of intelligence are far more effective and flexible than the use of Open Skies aircraft. I will not dispute the effectiveness of satellites, but I would argue that the most important purpose of the Open Skies Treaty is for the State Parties to exercise their right to fly freely in any part of another State Party's air space and for the receiving State to show that it has nothing to hide. Open Skies Missions involve a great number of authorities in the receiving State and truly demonstrates their state of openness and willingness to cooperate, thereby also involving basic principles of sovereignty. It is not necessarily the information gathered that defines the success of an Open Skies mission – it is the mission in itself!

This review conference marks the entry of the Open Skies Treaty into the digital era. Procedures we have become accustomed to and have great confidence in are undergoing a process of change in order to adjust to the technical development of sensor equipment. We are well prepared for this change but we still face many challenges ahead of us operationalizing new digital sensors and implementing new operating procedures.

I would like to extend my appreciation for the work carried out in the Informal Working Group of Sensors and the Informal Working Group of Rules and Procedures and also extend our gratitude to the chairmen of the two working groups for their work.

Not only does the Review Conference mark the entry into a new digital era, it also allows for considerations on how we can further improve the Open Skies regime based on the new technology. Furthermore, we have recently faced a worldwide financial crisis which has forced most – if not all - of the State Parties to implement national cost reducing measures. We also have to take this fact into consideration when shaping the Open Skies regime for the future.

Therefore, going digital should not be an aim in itself; we should also take this opportunity to launch considerations on how to make the Open Skies regime more cost effective. We cannot justify to go digital without exploring the cost reducing potential which digital equipment presents. Furthermore, we also have to examine our modus operandi in order to get rid of cost heavy paradigms. Let me give you a couple of examples:

- Digital equipment is light weight, requires less space and could therefore be mounted on an aircraft in a more flexible way. Thus, dual use of Open Skies aircraft could be improved lowering the overall operating cost.
- It does not require a laboratory and a time consuming procedure to process digital imageries. Thus, the number of Open Skies mission days could be reduced.

- Crew size should be limited to what is operationally necessary to carry out an Open Skies mission. Thus, smaller aircraft could be used.

I am sure the list of cost reducing suggestions could be expanded, but I would leave it to all of us – with our insight and expertise – to further discuss the issue.

In concluding, I would like to repeat that the Open Skies regime is one of our most important and successful Confidence and Security Building Measures – and that the success is not only a result of the gathered information on an Open Skies mission – it is the mission in itself.

But again, the Open Skies regime does not exist in a parallel world with no financial constraints. Therefore we have to consider cost reducing measures for Open Skies missions.

I hope this intervention can contribute to the discussion at this conference on how we can develop the Open Skies regime in order to preserve it for the future.

Thank you