



Secure World Foundation

Exchange of Views Statement

United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

June 2018

Thank you Madame Chair. We would first like to join the other delegations in thanking the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in particular Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo and her team, in their preparations for this meeting of COPUOS, and for UNISPACE+50.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates, as we proceed along the second half of the first century of humankind's exploration and use of outer space, global space activity continues to increase and change with each passing year.

Today there are more actors in outer space than ever before, and these actors are also more diverse. Space agencies, international organizations, and multinational corporations are being joined by an increasing number of small and medium-sized private-sector entities, public-private partnerships, and academic and amateur operators in space; and these actors are coming from every corner of the globe.

With each passing year there are also more activities in outer space; and these activities are becoming more experimental and diverse - including groundbreaking and novel technologies and capabilities which would have been difficult to predict, or even imagine, in decades past.

New ideas, new concepts, and new activities in space often originate in the private sector, especially because private actors are more open to both innovation, and to risk taking. The private sector is also moving at a faster rate of development than traditional actors in space. For these reasons, any useful international discussions on the use and governance of outer space must be aware of the growing importance of the commercial space sector, and useful discussions should take the concerns of the private sector into account in decision making.

Madame Chair, turning to space sustainability, we have long known that sustainability of the space environment is necessary for all actors in space. However, terrestrial reliance on space assets and capabilities cannot be overstated. Earth observation, weather monitoring, global navigation, and related applications all depend on the space segment. Consequently, sustainability on Earth hinges on the sustainability of space. We congratulate the efforts of this Committee in the work on the Long-term Sustainability Guidelines. We also note that observance and implementation of the guidelines is what will truly keep our uses of the space environment sustainable in the long-term.

In recent years, the international legal framework has been increasingly supplemented with various national frameworks. National space law provides specialized regimes, including regulatory frameworks for the licensing, authorizing, and continuing supervision of all national space activities, including non-governmental space activities. This regime of international and national law has enabled, rather than hindered, all of the uses and capabilities of outer space which underpin our interconnected world. We can be proud of this successful space law regime, much of it created within this Committee.

However, the future of space governance is certain to include the further development of national space legislation and regulatory frameworks. Does the future hold new international law-making for

space? Or, is the current international system best complemented by non-binding norms at the international level, while national space legislation sorts out the details? Let us reflect: what emerging activities in space need international governance and coordination? Likewise, what emerging space activities are best regulated at the national level? As we continue in this new era of space activities, these are key questions that should be considered.

Madame Chair, by 2018 the membership of COPUOS has grown to 87 Member States, complemented by a growing roster of international intergovernmental and non-governmental observers. Already one of the largest Committees in the UN system, COPUOS is certain to grow. The time has come for the members of this Committee to decide what this Committee's role will be in helping facilitate a better future. Let us ask ourselves:

- What current and emerging topics in space activities should to be agenda items in this Committee and its subcommittees?
- Alternatively, what items can be removed from the agenda, as no further work on them is warranted?
- Do the modalities of COPUOS need to shift - perhaps to include a stronger voice to the private sector, or of the scientific community?
- Should the Chairs be appointed for 2 years, or, as was the case in years previous, for longer terms? Earlier sessions of COPUOS and its subcommittees had chairpersons for 5 years and longer. Perhaps a minimum of 3 years in the Chair role would bring greater continuity to the role, and foster this Committee's effectiveness.

Additionally, rules of COPUOS should be considered. A set of clear, short, procedural rules for COPUOS may ease our work, and foster this Committee's effectiveness. We might take note of previous work by the Secretariat in the compilation of the document *'Compendium on rules of procedure and methods of work related to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies'*, contained in CRP.5 of the 2016 Session of COPUOS. Doesn't further reflection and iteration of the rules of COPUOS seem warranted?

Distinguished delegates, as an outline for how space, and OOSA specifically, contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the "Space2030 agenda" represents the primary guideline for future activities, and the Secure World Foundation firmly intends to support and participate in efforts to successfully carry out that agenda.

The present is a time for both reflection on past achievements and a time for looking ahead. This Committee, dedicated to the peaceful uses of outer space, might be inspired by the ambition, vision, and the boldness displayed in space exploration and science activities from across the globe

The Secure World Foundation's mission is working towards the achievement of a safe, secure, and peaceful space environment, and towards the protection of the Earth's environment from major threats.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates, the Secure World Foundation strongly supports the work of COPUOS and congratulates you and the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the successful execution of UNISPACE+50, and we look forward to continuing to support this Committee's efforts. Thank you for your time.

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