

 **Permanent  
Mission  
of Austria**

to the United  
Nations in Vienna

**AUSTRIA, ITEM 11**

**Space and Climate Change**

**64<sup>th</sup> COPUOS (25.08. – 03.09.2021)**

**Ambassador Gabriela SELLNER**

Chair,

Excellencies – Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges. According to the 2021 report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.

Each of the last four decades has been successively warmer than any decade that preceded it since 1850.

We need action at national, international and multilateral level since climate change does not stop at national borders.

This Committee has over the years emphasized the growing value of space-based technology in providing critical climate data to better understand and to better mitigate climate change. Action is needed by the global community to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate action.

Austria has been proactively raising awareness on the contributions of space technologies for climate action for many years. In this regard I would like to mention a side event at the Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019 and the United Nations/Austria symposium on

“Space Applications for Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action” in 2020 (A/AC.105/1220).

We need a holistic approach and since half of the Essential Climate Variables (ECVs) can only be properly measured from space, space assets should play an important role.

Therefore, Austria has proposed the **Space4Climate Action Initiative** to be implemented by UNOOSA.

**This Initiative aims to promote, strengthen and deliver targeted capacity building and technical advisory activities, facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation, and promote efforts to encourage the use of space for climate action from local to national to international levels.**

- The key features of our Initiative are Support space-based approaches to climate change
- Build capacity to use space technologies in local contexts, in particular by inclusion of space technologies and applications in climate action projects
- Bring together UN member states, the world’s leading space agencies, UN Organisations, companies, and academic institutions to tackle climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience

UNOOSA is the best body to provide action since it has decades of experience

- as capacity builder to provide access to and use space data to accelerate sustainable development,
- as convener and
- as gateway, UNOOSA is the sole UN body dedicated to the peaceful use of outer space and coordinates UN activities using space based technologies to support sustainable development.

We have presented a first concept note outlining the proposed vision and activities to COPUOS member states on 18th June 2021, inviting them to submit comments or

questions. At a side event during the High-level Political Forum on 14th July, Austria further informed participants about the initiative.

The Space4Climate Action Initiative supports SDG 13: Climate action. This SDG acts on many other human activities, the initiative will directly or indirectly impact other SDGs. The initiative is thus entirely within the Office's core portfolio.

In preparing the Initiative and the respective concept note we screened and assessed more than 30 existing initiatives across space agencies, government organizations, academic organizations and UN entities to avoid duplication, to prevent this new initiative from undermining existing national activities and to see where there is a need for further action to support the use of space based technologies and data in the area of climate change. We concluded that the capacities at national and regional level are often not developed or only in early-stage development in many countries. The assessment indicated the need for coordination on capacity-building and UN-inter-agency collaborative activities.

We identified six possible activities such as the promotion of the use of space technologies for Climate, provision of tailored technical assistance activities to strengthen the use of space technologies for targeted climate action as well as capacity-building and needs assessment as unique opportunities to facilitate the use of space technology in addressing climate initiatives and to enhance international cooperation in this area.

At the moment, Austria is engaging bilaterally with member states explaining the rationale and possible scope of the initiative. We will do so until the World Space Forum, where we plan to organize a special event under the auspices of the Austrian Minister for Climate Action to inform about the results of the consultations and the way forward.

We cordially invite all interested COPUOS member states to reach out to us for further discussion on the use of space technologies as regards SDG 13.

Thank you chair