

Australia, Item 4 – General exchange of views

64th Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

I congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this Committee. We look forward to a successful and productive session.

Additionally, we commend the work of the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs and the Secretariat for their continued support of the Committee and Subcommittees.

We meet this year under difficult circumstances. Our ability to continue multilateral discussions faced a critical test with the advent of COVID-19. However, with flexibility and adaptability, Member States and the Secretariat have been able to overcome these challenges and continue our important work.

Mr Chair,

Since the adoption of the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, humanity's use of space has evolved significantly. No longer is space the domain of national governments alone. As science and technology have driven us forward, so has our ability to access and interact with the space environment.

It is for this reason that the principles contained within the UN space treaties, as well as our ability to come to consensus on important issues, are important now more than ever.

Australia is committed to its international obligations and engagement with Member States through this Committee. As a founding member of COPUOS, and State Party to the five UN space treaties, Australia continues to adopt practices that ensure we meet our international obligations, as well as ensure a safe, stable and sustainable outer space environment, especially as the nature of space activities expand and new actors enter this environment.

Regulating space activities

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

Australia achieves this through multiple ways, including by advocating the importance of being responsible, through working closely with our domestic space industry to build a culture of safety and sustainability, and through regulation. The Australian Space Agency continues to fulfil its responsibilities in regulating activities that go above 100km, or involve high power rockets, as specified under the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) and associated Rules (the Rules).

Since the establishment of the Agency in 2018, the Agency has supported the granting of four complex applications with five further applications under consideration, including Australian launch permits and launch facility licences, and has considered 20 overseas payload permits, granting 18 to date. This shows growing momentum in Australia and the important role the Agency plays in ensuring safe space activities.

Regulating Australia's space industry, in addition to implementing the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, are important tenets in our effort to build a culture of safety and sustainability within Australia's space industry.

Working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Mr Chair,

Australia welcomes the establishment of a Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, under the leadership of Mr Umamaheswaran of India. Coming to an agreement on the composition of a Bureau now allows us to deliberate on a proposed Terms of Reference, Methods of Work and Work Plan.

We thank the Working Group Chair for consulting intersessionally with Member States on these important documents.

Australia is co-sponsoring a proposal on a Terms of Reference, Methods of Work and Work plan for the Working Group. We encourage Member States to study this proposal and its elements, contained within CRP.10. In our view, this proposal provides a practical and focused framework that allows Member States to fulfil our commitment to:

- Share and review implementation experiences, and highlight best practices in implementing the guidelines;
- Identify challenges associated with the emerging uses of space, and consider possible new guidelines; and
- Advance implementation of the LTS Guidelines, and contribute to capacity building efforts.

Australia extends its full support to the Chair in his efforts to advance this important work, and we look forward to sharing our experiences with the working group, as well as learning from others.

Working group on space resources

Mr Chair,

Australia welcomes the establishment of a Working Group on Space resources, under the leadership of Mr Andrzej Misztal of Poland and Professor Steven Freeland of Australia.

While we were unable to come to a consensus at the Legal Subcommittee on a mandate, terms of reference and method of work for the working group, we are optimistic that these important elements will be finalised at this session.

Australia is committed to meeting its international obligations, including the Outer Space Treaty. We are also a signatory to the

Artemis Accords, which provide a practical set of principles to guide space exploration activities.

We are confident the outputs produced by this working group will contribute to the development of norms that will guide the orderly and safe development, as well as rational management of the Moon's natural resources.

Conclusion

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

In conclusion, as the nature of space activities increase and continue to evolve, it is important the Member States of this Committee continue to come together and consider solutions to address emerging issues in space. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year we have been able to come together as a Committee and importantly:

- Establish a Bureau to guide the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities;
- Establish a Working Group on Space Resources; and
- Conclude our consideration of the Space2030 Agenda and implementation plan.

Australia is committed to the task at hand. We look forward to working with all Member States on the development of norms of behaviour to ensure a safe, stable and sustainable outer space environment.

Thank you.