

Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates,

At the outset, the Indian delegation would like to congratulate you on assuming the Chair of this 64th session of the Committee. We are confident that with your rich experience and able leadership, the session will achieve its objectives and we assure you of the wholehearted cooperation and support of the Indian delegation. We also express our sincere appreciation to Office of Outer Space Affairs for ably conducting the sessions of sub-committees under the unprecedented pandemic-affected conditions and we hope that the 64th session of the Committee also achieves similar success.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past five decades of pursuance of space activities, India has developed complete spectrum of civil space capabilities with an indigenously nurtured space programme, with the primary objective of utilizing space technology for national development and governance.

Indian delegation, while appreciating the achievement of other member states, would also like to inform this august gathering of its significant accomplishments since the last session of the committee in June 2019.

India launched its second lunar mission Chandrayaan-2 onboard GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle in July 2019. The Chandrayaan-2 orbiter was successfully placed in the 100 km lunar orbit and is providing valuable scientific data. The major scientific goals are to expand the lunar scientific knowledge through detailed study of topography, mineralogy, surface chemical composition and tenuous lunar atmosphere leading to a better understanding of origin and evolution of the Moon. The third Indian lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 is under preparation. In addition, ISRO executed five launch vehicle missions of PSLV with five Indian satellites and 49 customer satellites. One of our high throughput communication satellites was launched from French Guiana.

ISRO's first human spaceflight programme Gaganyaan, made significant progress. The programme envisages demonstration of human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit in the short-term and will lay the foundation for a sustained Indian human space exploration programme in the long run. The first manned flight is planned in 2023, which would be preceded with couple of unmanned flights.

The first Indian mission to study Sun, Aditya-L1 which is under preparation, aims to study solar activities and its effects on space weather.

Astrosat, India's dedicated astronomical observatory and Mars Orbiter, India's first interplanetary mission continue to provide valuable scientific data.

Regular space missions were conducted to maintain/enhance the Indian fleet of earth observation, meteorology and communication satellites. The planned missions

from early 2020 were affected by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, however space activities restarted towards the end of the year 2020.

Mr. Chairman,

While pursuing its national space programme, India has remained engaged with other nations and multilateral organizations. Currently we have formal cooperation agreements with 59 countries and 5 multinational bodies. Recent additions to this list are Bhutan, Mongolia, Nigeria and Tunisia.

The planned cooperative activities with other space agencies, including NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR), ISRO-CNES joint thermal infra-red satellite mission Trishna, ISRO-JAXA joint lunar exploration mission, human spaceflight support projects with ROSCOSMOS and CNES, and joint satellite mission with Bhutan progressed well. The South Asia Satellite launched by India in May 2017 for the benefit of SAARC nations continue to provide satellite communication services in those countries. Constant interactions were held with various space agencies to identify areas for cooperation.

India participated in the annual conferences of various space related multilateral forums, and also hosted the 14th ICG Meeting at Bangalore in December 2019 and the 34th plenary of CEOS in October 2020. We also became a party to the Joint Declaration of Interest for a Space Climate Observatory (SCO), steered by France.

India also continued its efforts on capacity building front through UN Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific & Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, bringing the total number of beneficiaries of various training programmes to more than 2800 officials from 109 countries. In fulfilment of India's commitment made in UNISPACE+50, India offered UNNATI training on nanosatellite building for 60 officials from 33 nations. When global pandemic hindered organizing in-person trainings, an open online course on Geospatial applications for Disaster Risk Management was jointly organized by UN-CSSTEAP and UNOOSA during October-December 2020 reaching 6870 officials from 102 countries.

Mr. Chairman,

India is a party to all the major international UN space treaties and also implements all the outer space related instruments, including the UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. India also implements a number of Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) - including registering space objects, prelaunch notifications, measures in harmony with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and numerous international cooperation activities.

Indian delegation would like take this opportunity to thank all the member states for reaching consensus in electing Indian nominee as the Chair of the Working Group on Long Term sustainability of outer space activities under Scientific & Technical Sub-Committee.

Government of India has approved space sector reforms for greater participation of private sector in space activities. Department of Space will enable Private Players to accomplish space activities through promotion and handholding, sharing of ISRO facilities, expertise and technology. A National Level autonomous nodal agency namely Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) was created to promote, authorize, monitor and supervise the space activities of the private sector and accord necessary permissions as per the regulatory provisions. We expect increased private sector participation in all aspects of space be it building launch vehicles and providing launch services, building and launching satellites, owning satellites and operating them and providing space based services.

India believes that Outer Space is the common heritage of humankind and it is the responsibility of all space-faring nations to preserve and promote the benefits flowing from advances made in space technology and its applications for all. India welcomes the adoption of 21 guidelines on Long Term Sustainability of outer space activities (LTS) by 62nd session of the Committee and is committed to play active role in the new working group on LTS.

The Indian delegation would like to reiterate its assurance to the Committee of its continued cooperation and support in conducting this session, and furthering the cause of peaceful uses of outer space.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates.