



**Permanent Mission of Italy
International Organisations - Vienna**

**64th session of the
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (STSC)**

**Statement by
Ambassador Alessandro Cortese**

Item 4: general exchange of views

Vienna, 25 August 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, and I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to congratulate you, Chairman, for presiding over this session of the Committee, and thank Director Di Pippo and the entire team of the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the excellent preparation of this meeting.

Chairman,

The session ahead of us is of particular importance, especially after the decision to cancel the 2020 meeting of the Committee, due to the pandemic. A pandemic which did not bring space activities to a halt. On the contrary, in 2020 a record number of objects were launched into space. Indeed, space activities are expanding at a pace never seen before and involve a wide and diversified range of new actors, especially from the private sector. This brings about enormous **opportunities**, but also **challenges**. The Committee has the unique responsibility to address them through international cooperation, and we must not lag behind in our technical, policy and legal deliberations.

This session, in particular, offers Member States a chance to make concrete progress on a number of important issues.

Above all, the **Space2030 Agenda**, which needs to be finalized and transmitted to the General Assembly for its adoption. The Agenda will contribute to raise awareness on the significant and growing impact of space science and technology on sustainable development and will offer policy solutions to this aim. After three years of productive negotiations, we are at the very final stage, and we encourage interested delegations to show the necessary flexibility to find consensus on the pending issues.

Equally important is the work on the **long-term sustainability**. We stress the importance of effectively following up on the adoption, in 2019, of the preamble and twenty-one guidelines, through the launch of the new working group under the leadership of Mr. Umamaheswaran, that we congratulate. With a view to constructively contributing to this objective, Italy has sponsored - together with other Member States - a Conference Room Paper containing a balanced proposal for the Terms of Reference, Method of Work and Workplan of the working group. These efforts are consistent with Italy's long-standing commitment to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and in this regard we are now aligning more and more our space activities to the agreed UN LTS guidelines.

Distinguished Chairman,

Allow me now to highlight some of the priorities of our national space programme.

Italy continues to play a leading role in the field of **Earth observation**. The **COSMO-SkyMed** satellite constellation is at the forefront of radar technologies, and will be integrated by a new second generation satellite by the end of this year. Furthermore, Italy has expanded its capacities in the area of hyperspectral technology, with a program called PRISMA, managed by the Italian Space Agency-ASI. The first of the two satellites which compose **PRISMA** has been fully operational since January 2020. It's important to note that its data are accessible free of charge by the international scientific community through a dedicated portal.

Italy is equally determined to strengthen its position in the field of **space exploration**, along three main routes: Mars, the Moon and Low Earth Orbits.

We are involved in important programs and missions for the exploration of the **red planet**, such as ExoMars, the joint program of the European Space Agency and the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos; the NASA program Mars Sample Return; the JAXA program Mars Moon Exploration; and Mars Ice Mapper, a joint collaboration between NASA, ASI, the Canadian space agency and JAXA.

When it comes to the **Moon**, Italy, which is a signatory to the Artemis Accords, participates in the NASA Artemis program for lunar exploration through its membership of ESA and in cooperation with NASA.

The contribution to the programme consists mainly in the provision of key elements of the architecture of the program, such as orbital and ground habitation systems, as well as telecommunication and navigation systems.

As for the **Low Earth Orbits** region, my Country continues to support human exploration through the activities on the International Space Station (ISS), of which a large part of the habitable area has been built in Italy. And I am glad to mention here that **Samantha Cristoforetti**, the Italian astronaut of the ESA corps, has been appointed as Commander of the ISS for 2022, following an in-principle agreement by international partners. Ms. Cristoforetti will be Europe's first female in command of an ISS expedition and we are confident that this will help foster the interest of young women in the space sector and, more in general, in the STEM disciplines.

To conclude, I wish to mention Italy's commitment to **space diplomacy**, particularly in the context of our current Presidency of the **G20**. Following up on the initiative launched last year by the Saudi Space Commission, the Italian Space Agency is organizing the second edition of the Space Economy Leaders meeting, in order to raise awareness among G20 countries about the important contribution of space technology to the global economy. The event will take place in Rome, on 20 September, in a hybrid format, and will also feature the participation of the space industry.

Thank you for your attention.