

64th COPUOS UN

Vienna 25 August-3 September 2021

MOON VILLAGE ASSOCIATION STATEMENT, Agenda item4

On August 30th

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for the Moon Village Association, as an Observer member with COPUOS to address, virtually, this session of COPUOS.

Mr. Chair, as the MVA Delegation is taking the floor for the first time, we would like to congratulate you as Chair of COPUOS.

MVA is confident that, under your wise leadership, this session will reach fruitful results, even if in hybrid form. My delegation would also like to extend its gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and her staff for their hard work in organizing this meeting.

MVA considers that the near future will see a multitude of lunar missions through the efforts of both space agencies and commercial stakeholders. The current lack of coordination mechanisms for lunar activities presents challenges to future missions and could lead to unintentional harmful interference, especially in the light of the increased global interest in specific areas like the lunar south pole. The need to preserve the peaceful uses of space, together with the desire to begin a new era of sustainable space exploration, urges the consideration of approaches that promote future lunar sustainability, or recommended practices for upcoming lunar activities.

A number of relevant issues will need to be defined to ensure sustainable lunar exploration and utilization in and around the Moon. This includes the definition, in general, of common level playing field, in particular, for example, of sharing information, registration of activities, mitigating the creation of debris in lunar orbit, and coordinating access to natural resources.

In view of this, the MVA decided to promote the development of a neutral forum for multi-stakeholder discussions on lunar exploration and utilization: The *Global Expert Group on Sustainable Lunar Activities* (or GEGSLA).

The detail content of GEGSLA definition and plan, is included in the Conference Room Paper AC.105/2021/CRP.13

A similar paper has been presented at the 60th Legal Subcommittee and 57th Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC). This information has been recorded in the Subcommittee reports. Several delegations stressed the importance of GEGSLA.

A side event related to this topic has been organized on August 27 at 17:15-18:00.

Mr. Chair,

The Moon Village Association notes that as from 2022 there will be a steady number of missions to the Moon and these will include the return of humans to the Moon. This is the reason why the public needs to be made aware of all these developments and prospective events. In this spirit, MVA recommends that COPUOS adopts and proposes to the UN General Assembly the approval of the International Moon Day as an annual educational, cultural and scientific event aimed at raising awareness among the general public about the status and prospects of the programs, at a global level, of Moon Exploration and Utilisation and at promoting public support for getting involved in this major step for humanity.

Moon Exploration has started when Luna 2, a spacecraft launched by the Soviet Union, made an impact on the surface of the Moon on September 14, 1959. Many more spacecraft have been launched in the last 62 years from different stakeholders including: China, India, Japan, Europe, Israel, Russia, United States to better understand the Moon and its relationship to Earth. However, the first human landing on the Moon on 20 July 1969 by the United States Apollo 11 mission represent the pinnacle of these efforts.

International Days and Weeks are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilise political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity. The existence of international days predates the establishment of the United Nations, but the UN has embraced them as a powerful advocacy tool. Related to outer space there are already established events like: World Space Week (4 - 10 October), International Day of Human Space Flight (12 April), International Asteroid Day (30 June).

The International Moon Day is intended as an annual event held for the general public on the anniversary of the 1969 first human landing, 20 July. The International Moon Day will inform the public of the work undertaken in this area by COPUOS and its member States facilitated by the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

MVA believes that the International Moon Day is a good and worthy opportunity to educate the public and promote such worldwide action on the status and prospects for humanity of the sustainable Moon Exploration and Utilisation. This event will foster increase global cooperation between stakeholders in all countries of the world as well as promoting increasing participation to this goal of the future generation and better gender balance. This day will promote events around the globe on 20 July, including community panel discussion, lectures, webinar, concerts, exhibits and screening of educational video.

The details of this proposal are contained in the Conference Room Paper AC.105/2021/CRP.14.

More details of the overall MVA activities will be provided at a technical presentation on August 30 PM.

MVA looks forward to working with COPUOS and its subcommittees for the stepwise, equitable and sustainable development of the Moon Village, and are eager to play our part, as permanent observers at the historic, central, and pivotal activity of COPUOS in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space

Thank you for your attention,

Dr. Giuseppe Reibaldi/ President Moon Village Association