



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**TO**

**THE 64<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE  
PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE  
30 AUGUST 2021**

**TO BE DELIVERED BY:  
H.E AMBASSADOR R MOLEKANE**

**AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

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**Chairperson,**

South Africa would like to congratulate you, Chair, Mr Marius-Ioan Piso of Romania on chairing the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UNCOPUOS. We would also like to welcome the new member States; Angola, Bangladesh, Panama and Slovenia, that have recently been admitted into this august Committee, pursuing peaceful use of outer space.

My delegation wishes to express its deep condolences on the passing of Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez of Chile, a prominent and vocal figure, who has made a number of critical contributions in this Committee, especially its Legal Sub-committee

South Africa, like other UNCOPUOS member states, places great importance on the peaceful uses of outer space. We do this because we are convinced of the immense potential the peaceful use of outer space can contribute to the broader sustainable development of mankind.

**Chairperson,**

Our country continues to break new ground in exploring the best possible ways to ensure that space activities are conducted in accordance with and in compliance with existing rules of international space law. In this respect South Africa continues to believe that space activities should be beneficial to all mankind and contribute to prosperity and sustainable development of all nations. These activities should be governed by the rule of law and the progressive development of space law to ensure the peaceful use of space is of benefit to all.

**Chairperson,**

The process to reform our domestic space legislation to incorporate new trends in national space activities is close to finalisation. The proposed legislation takes into consideration substantive issues that are of relevance to the emerging global space dispensation, including pro-activeness in application of the Registration and the Liability Conventions, as well as guidelines developed under the Long-term Sustainability of outerspace.

**Chairperson,**

South Africa continues to organize the Africa Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Competition despite the serious challenges of pandemic. The rapid increase in the number of teams and participation from Universities across Africa is testimony to the interest that is being generated each year by this exciting Competition. The result of this will be an ever-increasing pool of law graduates, who are enthusiastic about the field of Space law, which positively influences the capacity-building of space regulations for the benefit of African space arena. This year, the University of Pretoria has again taken the leading position for the Continent and is expected to represent the region during the International Astronautical Congress in Dubai later in the year.

## **Chairperson,**

The country continues to develop and use space systems technology and its applications to contribute to economic growth, the reduction of poverty and the creation of knowledge economy.

In this regard, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology is a leading a consortium that develops a South African constellation of low-cost nanosatellites to facilitate South African Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in support of Operation Phakisa. Specifically, the Phakisa “MDASat” constellation will provide international maritime communications services, which will initially include the Automatic Identification System (AIS) standard (MDASat-1), followed by the evolving VHF Data Exchange Service (VDES) standard (MDASat-2).

The MDASat constellation will provide South Africa with sovereign control over its AIS and VDES maritime data with associated improved control over data cost and access. In addition, with its flexible communications platform, MDASat will also enable various other satellite-based services for South Africa and the greater continent. The MDASat-1 launch window is in December 2021 on the Falcon rocket in the USA.

## **Chairperson**

Our country has a vibrant scientific community working on astronomy, both radio and optical domain. It is home of the MeerKAT radio telescope and future home of the SKA-MID telescope. The MeerKAT telescope is

currently the most powerful radio interferometer in the world, and it is a precursor of the SKA-MID, which will greatly expand its capabilities.

The COPUOS Legal Subcommittee earlier this year noted the application from the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory for permanent observer status. The South African delegation wishes to support the application for observer status by the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory.

### **Chairperson**

On the international cooperation front, South Africa is pleased to announce that the Heads of Space Agencies of BRICS nations have signed a cooperation agreement on the development of a BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation. In essence, this agreement enables the BRICS Space Agencies to build a 'virtual constellation of remote sensing satellites', as a data-sharing mechanism, supported through their ground station infrastructure and made up of existing satellites contributed by BRICS space agencies.

### **Chairperson,**

South Africa is pleased to note significant achievements made towards the development of a set of voluntary, non-binding guidelines to promote safety, sustainability and security of activities in outer space. In this regard, South Africa, wishes to congratulate Mr Umamaheswaran R of India on being nominated as the Chair of LTS 2.0 Working Group, which will lead the work of the remaining guidelines into fruition, starting with

work of the TOR and Method of Work during this session of the Committee. South Africa joins other delegations in committing to support this critical work for the future sustainability of global Space for future generations.

The outer space environment is becoming increasingly complex and congested, owing to the growing number of objects in outer space. Measures are needed to improve the safety and sustainability of space flight. The implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities should be supported in the context of discussions on space traffic management

### **Chairperson**

My delegation further supports the establishment of the working group on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources. We are of the view that the uncontrolled exploitation of space resources has the potential to destabilise the outer space environment, and South Africa looks forward to participating in this working group.

I thank you.