

Statement by Sweden, Agenda Item 4, General Exchange of Views

COPUOS Main Committee, 25 August - 3 September

Mr Chair,

Please allow me to welcome you as Chair of this COPUOS session and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Director Di Pippo and the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the excellent preparation of this session, despite the difficult circumstances. Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. Please, allow me to add the following in a national capacity.

COPUOS and its Subcommittees are unique platforms for international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, including the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence building measures regulating space activities.

Sweden is a firm believer in multilateralism. Our new national space strategy, which was adopted in 2018, underlines the importance of international cooperation and defines space as a global common. Sweden remains committed to promoting the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.

Sweden has been an actor in space for more than 50 years. We have an advanced space industry, cutting-edge research and the space centre, Esrange, with more than 600 successful launches of sounding rockets, in northern Sweden. Last October the government inaugurated a test bed facility at the Esrange Space Center, where rocket engines and reusable space technology can be developed and tested. The government is continuing investments in Esrange, with the aim of developing a capacity to launch small satellites into orbit.

Mr Chair,

Outer space resources and the services that they provide are essential for many sectors in today's society and for our global economy. Space services and technology are also drivers for socioeconomic development and crucial for tackling our common global challenges and implementing Agenda 2030. This underlines the importance of the Space2030 Agenda. Sweden welcomes the progress made by the Space2030 Agenda Working Group so far and hopes that this process can be finished promptly, so that we can deliver on the mandate received by the General Assembly.

Mr Chair,

In order to continue to reap these benefits from space, ensuring the long-term sustainability of space activities is of course a prerequisite. Our increasing use and reliance on space poses new challenges for the future, and COPUOS has a crucial role in tackling these. Sweden welcomes the agreement on the designation of Mr. Umamaheswaran as Chair of the Bureau of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space and the Chair's working paper. We hope that consensus on the working group's terms of reference, methods of work and work plan can be reached during this session of COPUOS and Sweden looks forward to engaging constructively in this work. It is key that the group can start its important work as soon as possible, and address challenges in outer space including the concrete implementation of the adopted 21 Guidelines.

Our national implementation of the guidelines is underway, and we appreciate the opportunities to learn from other countries' experience. A key element, and main point of focus for our national implementation this last year, has been the ongoing revision of our national space legislation. A national inquiry has been tasked to propose a modernized national space law later this autumn.

Sweden notes the paper "Recommendations to Keep Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society" presented by Chile, Ethiopia, Jordan, Slovakia, Spain and the International Astronomical Union and the following discussions in the STSC. We see the need for continued

deliberations on this topic and support the proposal to include this as a temporary agenda item for next year's STSC.

Sweden also welcomes the establishment of the new Working Group on Space Resources [with Ambassador Misztal from Poland as Chair and Professor Freeland from Australia as Vice Chair.] We welcome the efforts and preparatory work by member states and the Chairs that led to this result. We look forward to early agreement on the Working Group's mandate, terms of reference, methods of work and work plan during this session, based on the revised proposal by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Sweden appreciates efforts by the UNOOSA and partners to highlight the role of women in space and the need to improve gender balance in the space sector. Ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in space is not only a question of fairness, it is also smart policy.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, Sweden will continue to actively engage in multilateral cooperation on space issues, in COPUOS and elsewhere. We will continue to promote the sustainable, safe, secure and responsible use of outer space for peaceful purposes. We remain committed to work to prevent an arms race in outer space and to ensure that outer space does not become an arena for conflict. We will support efforts to enhance transparency and openness of the space environment and the sharing of information from space applications.

We look forward to working together with all delegations to ensure a fruitful session.

I thank you.