

Statement – Australia, Item 3

60th Legal Subcommittee

General exchange of views

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this Subcommittee. We look forward to a successful and productive session.

Additionally, we commend the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Ms Simonetta Di Pippo, the Secretariat and staff for their continued support of the Committee and Subcommittees.

Australia appreciates the resilience and flexibility of Member States as we come together under such circumstances to continue the important work of the Subcommittee.

Madam Chair,

Australia is States Party to the five international space treaties and a founding member of the Committee.

Developing regulation and policies consistent with our international legal obligations and norms of behaviour is an important part of our goal to be a responsible global citizen.

Australia is working towards a safe, stable and sustainable outer space environment, in which the space industry can participate. We are taking active steps to ensure we meet this object, encourage entrepreneurship, and build a culture of safety and sustainability within our space industry.

Central to this, is Australia's update of our regulatory framework for civil space activities.

Australia's regulatory framework

Madam Chair,

The Australian Space Agency is responsible for regulating activities that go above 100km, or involve high power rockets, as specified under the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) and associated Rules (the Rules), which commenced on 31 August 2019. The Rules regulating high power rocket activities commenced on 30 June 2020.

The Act establishes a regulatory framework for the licensing of, and provides safety requirements for, space activities in Australia or involving Australian interests, as well as implements elements of our international obligations.

The Act is supported by three sets of Rules. Information for minimum insurance coverage for applicants is provided for under the *Space (Launches and Returns) (Insurance) Rules 2019*, while detailed information on the requirements for an application; the additional criteria to be considered by the Minister; and the standard conditions that apply are contained within the *Space (Launches and Returns) (General) Rules 2019*. Detailed information for Australian High Power Rocket Permits are included within the *Space (Launches and Returns) (High Power Rocket) Rules 2020*.

Madam Chair

A key purpose within the Act and Rules is to balance the risk of damage, to persons and property, with the benefits of increased participation in the Australian space industry. To align with international practice, the Act includes requirements for a debris mitigation strategy for certain authorisations. The strategy must be based on an internationally recognised guideline or standard for debris mitigation, including for example the COPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

Our regulatory activities have been part of this growth. Since the establishment of the Australian Space Agency in 2018, the Agency has received documentation for 17 complex applications, including Australian

launch permits and launch facility licences, and has considered 20 overseas payload permits for assessment under the Act. These applications come from an increasingly diverse range of organisations, including small to medium enterprise, and universities.

LTS Guidelines – National Space Law Initiative

Madam Chair,

As space activities grow and transform, Australia is committed to the implementation of the Guidelines on the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (Guidelines).

The Guidelines are important to the sustainable growth of the space industry. They create a framework that aims to ensure current and emerging participants in space activities act in a sustainable manner, while enjoying the benefits of space.

As part of our efforts to promote and support capacity building, Australia collaborated with 8 Indo-Pacific countries through the National Space Law Initiative, including to produce a report that promotes information sharing and mutual learning in relation to our respective regulatory frameworks.

We thank Japan and Vietnam for their chairing of this group, and Secretariat for their coordination efforts.

Artemis Accords

Madam Chair,

Australia continues to engage with our partners on the development of norms of behaviour to ensure the safe and sustainable use of space.

In this regard, in October 2020, Australia became a founding signatory to the Artemis Accords.

The Accords establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration cooperation among nations participating in NASA's lunar exploration plans. The Accords aim to increase the safety of operations,

reduce uncertainty, and promote the sustainable and beneficial use of space.

Australia's position is that the Artemis Accords are consistent with Australia's international legal obligations, and will guide Australia's future space activities supported under our *Moon to Mars* program, where appropriate.

Work of the Committee

Madam Chair,

COPUOS plays an important role in facilitating the development of rules and norms of behaviour that contribute to a safe, stable and sustainable outer space environment; as well as facilitating a consensus-based approach to addressing emerging challenges.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the scheduled consultations on space resource exploration, exploitation and utilisation, as well as the "Space2030" Agenda.

Conclusion

Madam Chair,

Australia is committed to its international obligations and engagement with Member States through COPUOS. We look forward to collaborating with Member States as we continue the important work of this Subcommittee.

Thank you.