



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

Finland's Statement in the 60th session of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 31 May – 11 June 2021

Agenda Item 3 – General exchange of views

Thank you Madame Chair,

First, I would like to reiterate our delegation's full support to you Madame Chair, and take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to you for your leadership during the first days of this hybrid meeting. We also wish to thank Director Di Pippo and the United Nations Office for Outer Space, for their support in organising and conducting the meeting.

Finland recognizes the importance of the Legal Subcommittee as an indispensable forum for the exchange of views on legal aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation in this regard, and wish to actively contribute in the work of this session.

Madame Chair, and distinguished Delegates,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union (EU), and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

The themes of sustainable use of outer space and sustainable growth of the space sector, in particular the NewSpace economy, are the key priorities of the Finnish space policy. Finland has a particular interest in small satellite activities. There are currently eleven satellites registered in the national registry. All of these have been launched in the past three years. These satellites include both missions by scientific institutions as well as commercial companies.

International cooperation forms a firm fundament of Finnish space activities. Finland is a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since 1995, and the Finnish industry and research organisations participate actively in various ESA programmes. In this framework, also the EU Space Programme and other multilateral and bilateral collaborations continue to have an important role in the Finnish space programme.

Finland is an Arctic country and one of the eight member states in the Arctic Council. Finland sees the Arctic as one important area of regional collaboration. Sustainable growth of the Arctic area can be ensured through active development and use of space infrastructure that can serve the specific needs of the area.

Finland's national climate targets are ambitious: Finland will be climate neutral by 2035 and climate negative soon after that. Finland promotes the role of space solutions in combatting climate change. Space data plays a key role in monitoring the environmental changes and the key variables such as greenhouse gases as well as reacting to natural disasters. Finland is fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals that will steer the promotion of sustainable development for the next decade.

The issue concerning safety and sustainability of space activities is a growing concern to all space actors and the society. Finland considers that the development of a global Space Traffic Management (STM) regime that contributes towards creation, development and implementation of common international rules that take into consideration changes in the sector is timely and essential. An effective space situational awareness capacity,

including space weather, space surveillance and tracking and near earth objects capabilities, is vital in supporting these aims. Space Traffic Management is an interdisciplinary matter and encompasses regulatory, technical and operational elements at different levels. Finland considers that international cooperation, coordination, and information sharing with regards to all aspects of space activities is key to enable reaching the goals of both sustainable and safe use of outer space. We are pleased to see the progress in the European discussion on Space Traffic Management, furthered by the current, previous and next Presidencies of the Council of European Union and the common roadmap on the future process as discussed last week in the Competitiveness Council.

Finland welcomes the adoption of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities by the Committee in 2019, and their subsequent endorsement by the General Assembly, with great appreciation. We are pleased to see that consensus was reached on the composition of the working group during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Coupled with the NewSpace reality, the increased number of actors and objects, it means that the application, implementation and enforcement of the LTS guidelines and space debris mitigation measures at national level are in the key position to ensure the protection of the outer space environment, as well as the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Finland has started to work with the national implementation of the adopted guidelines. In addition to practical implementation, we consider that it is important to engage in international discussion on policy and legal issues to support coherent development of the norms contained in the LTS guidelines through unified reporting practices on national implementation.

The Finnish Space Act that entered into force in 2018 establish an authorization and supervision process for national space activities as well as a national space object registry. The objective of the national legislation in addition to ensuring compliance with State's international obligations is to create a predictable and legally transparent environment for national space activities and to ensure the safety of the activities as well as the sustainable use of outer space. These are supported by inclusion of requirements for mitigation of space debris and minimizing adverse impacts of space missions to the Earth, atmosphere, and the outer space, in the law.

Madame Chair,

Finland is of the opinion that exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources are best to be coordinated at international, multilateral level for the peaceful and sustainable exploration and use of outer space, that is carried out in accordance with international law and in the benefit and interests of all States. Finland welcomes with appreciation the Scheduled Informal Consultations on the issue of Exploration, Exploitation and Utilization of Space Resources in ensuring meaningful and effective exchange among the member States of the Committee. We wish to thank the co-moderators, Andrzej Misztal and Steven Freeland, for their efforts, and wish to convey our support to this process during this session.

We consider it essential that as an outcome of these scheduled informal consultations the Legal Subcommittee establishes a Working Group on Space Resources at this year's session and without further delay. To that aim, Finland has initiated together with the German delegation a working paper. We wish that this contribution could on its part facilitate the discussion during the scheduled informal consultations. The working paper builds upon previous working papers submitted on the issue of space resources, which have been instrumental in advancing the debate on the establishment of a working group, notably the proposal by Belgium and Greece. We are very pleased that the delegations of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Slovakia and Spain have joined to co-sponsor this initiative. We wish to actively engage with all delegations to find consensus on the establishment of the working group and related modalities such as methods of work, terms of reference and dedicated work plan, so that the working group can officially begin its work in 2022.

Finally, Madame Chair,

Finland believes that the five United Nations treaties on outer, together with the UN General Assembly sets of principles as well as other related documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, are the cornerstones of international space law. Finland believes that having binding guidance at international level

for the conduct of space activities brings predictability and creates conditions for tackling global problems. In parallel, Finland stresses the importance of effective implementation of non-legally binding instruments, in particular with regards to orbital space debris mitigation, at national level, as we believe that those instruments are currently the best way to forward for an international regime for sustainable use and safe conduct of outer space activities.

Finland wishes to recall the outstanding work of the Committee, its subcommittees and the office for Outer Space Affairs in developing the seven thematic priorities and the objectives related to UNISPACE+50, which provide great basis for the preparation of a Space2030 agenda. Finland supports and will contribute in the continuous development of these objectives, and stresses the importance of strong cooperation amongst all the actors - the Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector entities in fulfilling the goals of sustainable development.

Thank you Madame Chair and distinguished Delegates.