

AGENDA ITEM 6A

STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA

LSC AGENDA ITEM 6(A): DEFINITION AND DELIMITATION OF OUTER SPACE

02 June 2021

Chairperson, and Distinguished delegates

The South African delegation appreciates the opportunity to make a statement on matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space during this session of the Legal Subcommittee of the UNCOPUOS.

The South African delegation reaffirms its support and commitment towards contributing to finding an amicable way forward to the current efforts and debates garnered towards exploring various approaches and mechanisms reaching a general consensus regarding the definition and delimitation of outer space. These efforts are crucial to achieving the important mandate of this Legal Subcommittee.

In this regard, South Africa notes the updated report by the secretariat, which provides the historical summary on the consideration of the question on the definition and delimitation of outer space taking into account the work done by the Subcommittee and the Working Group. This report provides a good consolidation of the views expressed by Member States and critical aspects that could be considered to advance this debate to reaching a final conclusion on the matter.

Chairperson,

It is in this context that South Africa continues to maintain its position and views as previously expressed to this Committee. In this regard, South Africa is of the view that, the issues regarding the definition and delimitation of outer space cuts across space related fields, such as the airspace and space and has a direct impact only on the work of this Subcommittee, but also the work of the other space related bodies/structures such as the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) and the International Telecommunications Union. As such, it is my delegation's view that any discussions that are undertaken on this

topic should be done in close cooperation with ICAO. My delegation would be supportive of the establishment of a structure comprising representatives of UNOOSA and ICAO in this regard.

Chairperson

This distinction is becoming more and more relevant as there is an increase in scientific and technology advancement including sub-orbital flights, for space tourism, which have a tendency to operate in both airspace and outer space with a potential to create ambiguity on the applicable law. In this regard we will increasingly be confronted with questions as to who sets the standards for this activity and ultimately has responsibility for its safe management. Consequently, we can no longer delay proclaiming on the definition and delimitation of outer space as commercial space operators are ready to bring about manned space flights for commercial gain.

In conclusion, **Chairperson**, South Africa reiterates its commitment to continue to support the discussions under this important agenda item and is supportive of the collective efforts between States through this Legal Subcommittee of UNCOPUOS, UNOOSA and relevant international bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) [to assist in the finalisation of this matter with the aim](#) to ensure that there is legal certainty and uniformity in the conduct of space activities.

Thank you Chairperson and members