



Permanent Mission of Italy
International Organisations - Vienna

**58th SESSION OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE
(STSC)**

**Statement by
Ambassador Alessandro Cortese**

Item 3: general exchange of views

Vienna, 19 April 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, but I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Let me first congratulate you, Madame Chair, for presiding over this session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and thank Director Di Pippo and the staff of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for the excellent preparation of the meeting, despite the very challenging circumstances. Italy welcomes the resumption - after more than one year: we've been waiting too long - of the intergovernmental meetings under the auspices of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

We also wish to **commend the Office** for intensifying and strengthening its activities - even during the pandemic - aimed at facilitating international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of space and mobilizing space science and technology for sustainable development. And indeed the **COVID-19 pandemic** has clearly shown the essential contribution of space technology, applications and data to the welfare and resilience of our societies, as well as to delivering innovation and digitalization for citizens and communities.

In this regard, I wish to mention that after our last meeting, the Italian Space Agency has specifically invested 10 million Euros in a programme carried out in cooperation with the European Space Agency, under the title “**Space in response to COVID-19 outbreak**”.

Through a call for application, companies have been invited to submit innovative proposals aimed at deploying space-facilitated services to respond to the pandemic, particularly in the education and health sectors. For instance, one of the selected projects, called “Space for Children”, is carried out in the pediatric hospital “Gaslini” in Genova and relies on space applications to provide psychological support to children.

Madame Chair,

Turning the attention to the current session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, Italy stresses the importance of effectively following up on the successful adoption, in 2019, of the preamble and twenty-one guidelines for the **long-term sustainability of outer space activities**, through the establishment of a working group in accordance with the mandate given by the Committee. With a view to constructively contributing to this objective, Italy has sponsored - together with other Member States - a Conference Room Paper containing a proposal for the Terms of Reference, Method of Work and Workplan of the working group, and we hope that all Member States will consider it seriously. These efforts are consistent with Italy’s long-standing commitment to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and in this regard we are now aligning more and more our space activities to the agreed UN LTS guidelines.

Madame Chair,

Despite the pandemic, the past year has been significant for Italy's contribution to space science and exploration, and in the interest of time I shall mention just a few examples of that.

First, the ongoing **PRISMA mission**, developed by the Italian Space Agency, which is the first European Earth observation system equipped with a cutting-edge hyperspectral optical sensor, and offers an unprecedented contribution to the observation of natural resources from space and to the study of main environmental processes. A technical presentation will be delivered on this topic next 26 April.

PRISMA completes the current offer by the Italian Space Agency in the context of **Earth observation**, which so far had been based on the Synthetic Opening Radars of the COSMO-SkyMed constellation, which features state-of-the-art technologies and engineering solutions and whose second generation satellite has now become operational.

In the field of **space exploration**, last October, Italy, with other international partners and the United States, signed the **ARTEMIS Accords**, a practical set of principles grounded in the Outer Space Treaty, which intends to increase the safety of operations, reduce uncertainty and promote the sustainable and beneficial use of space for all of humanity. Italy is proud to participate in this initiative, which opens a new, exciting chapter in space exploration. We look forward to working through COPUOS to share lessons learned in implementing the Accords with UN member states and the international space community.

Alongside earth observation, space exploration and research, *access to space* continues to represent a priority for Italy, through the European launch programs such as ARIANE and the VEGA launch vehicles .

Madame Chair,

At a time when space activities are diversifying and many new actors are getting increasingly engaged in space ventures, we believe the **Committee** – of which **Italy is a founding member since 1959** -, its Subcommittees and the Office for Outer Space Affairs continue to play a critical role in promoting international cooperation.

As a **long-standing space-faring nation**, which launched its first satellite in 1964 and sent its first astronaut on board the shuttle in 1992, Italy remains fully committed to a **cooperative approach to advance the exploration and use of outer space**. Only through cooperation will we be able to fully reap the benefits of space science and technology, while ensuring that space activities continue to be conducted for peaceful purposes.

Thank you.