

Statement Netherlands regarding agenda item 4 (General Exchange of views)

Delivered by: J. Kroon, Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure, The Netherlands.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

1. Please allow me to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Acting Director Mr. Hedman and the Office for Outer Space Affairs, for the preparation of this meeting of the COPUOS Main Committee.
The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union, and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity to highlight a few developments in the Netherlands, to reaffirm our priorities.
2. Whether on earth or in outer space, the Netherlands is committed to the international rule of law. Hence, the Netherlands is signatory to all five United Nations Treaties related to outer space. And accordingly, the Netherlands has established the Dutch Space Act.
3. The number of space activities in the Netherlands is growing structurally, resulting in an increase in the number of Dutch space operators and satellites under Dutch jurisdiction and control. This year there are four licensees under the Dutch Space Act which operate twenty-two Dutch satellites: ten Geostationary satellites and twelve. Low Earth Orbit satellites.
Based on several recent developments we believe the number of satellites under Dutch jurisdiction will increase significantly over the coming years.
4. In light of this, the Netherlands is particularly committed to a safe, secure and sustainable outer space environment. The Netherlands has therefore made an analysis of how the 21 LTS guidelines fit in our existing regulations and how our current Space Act could be adapted accordingly. The results of this analysis also serve as input for our process to amend our Space Act at a later stage.

Mr. Chairman,

5. As outer space becomes increasingly more congested, there is a need for reliable and sustainable space traffic management. Our economies, societies, and security depend more than ever on space infrastructure. And yet, our current regime of space traffic management is inadequate and unsustainable.
6. The Netherlands is convinced that the international community must strive towards a legally binding instrument for space traffic management, negotiated here, within the framework of the UN. We need governance that enables safe and sustainable space-travel, while providing a global level playing field.

7. Moreover, in developing strategies and adequate regulatory frameworks, we need to include private and public stakeholders. Not only because the space sector is a global market. But because technologies advance rapidly, implicating that we should adopt a technology-open approach as much as possible.
8. The ongoing deployment of thousands of satellites in the Low Earth Orbit does not only affect in-orbit operations. These satellite constellations have major influence on the visibility of the night skies for ground-based astronomy. Unfortunately, these adverse effects have not been adequately considered. This calls for an internationally agreed regulation, and in our view, this matter falls within the core remit of the UN COPUOS.
9. The Netherlands Delegation therefore agrees with the proposal to add this item to the agenda for a period of 3 years as suggested during the previous STS Copuos meeting. We consider the concerns raised by the International Astronomical Union very relevant and agree that they require attention at international level. The Netherlands therefore asks other Member States to support the proposal from STS Copuos to place this agenda item on the agenda for a period of three years and to appoint an Expert Group during that time to work on this subject, resulting in a final report with relevant conclusions and recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Staring up at the night sky has given us astonishing insights and knowledge. But perhaps the most valued benefit of outer space activities is its contribution to sustainable development.
11. The Netherlands (with our European partners in the Copernicus programme) has been instrumental in the technical development of the TROPOMI instrument. Besides our Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute KNMI, our scientific community and various smaller companies developed applications in support of climate change research and air quality management.
12. The Netherlands believes that the climate crisis requires urgent action and has therefore signed on to the charter on the establishment of the space for climate observatory (SCO) last week during the Global Space for Climate Change conference in Oslo, Norway. Together with the other signatories the Netherlands commits to focusing our efforts on the use of space for the monitoring, mitigation, and adaptation of climate change.
13. The Netherlands supports the use of satellite data for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Netherlands funded the Geodata for Agriculture and Water Facility with € 60 mln, which aims to support 4,5 million smallholder food producers with satellite based

information and financial services by 2023. By the end of 2021, we have reached more than 4 million small-scale food producers with satellite based advisory or financial services.

However, more public investment is needed in order to further scale up existing information services that help smallholders increase their productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner and to ensure an efficient use of water. The Netherlands works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in providing data on water productivity in agriculture.

14. Last year we have also released a grant with the topic: satellite data on behalf of climate mitigation and adaptation. The goal is to support the development of satellite based services that have a direct impact on the Netherlands and that contribute to achieving the 1,5 degree target of the Paris climate accord. Six organisations have been granted for the feasibility phase and the innovations range from measuring and monitoring of carbon stock in soil; the use of satellite based soil moisture information for water management; to the use of agro forestry for increasing carbon storage.
15. Whether on earth or in outer space, there is a need for sustainable governance of resources. As to the working group on Space Resources, the Netherlands welcomes the work of this working group, and would very much welcome the adoption of its report. The Netherlands has submitted together with other states a paper containing the Joint Views on the scope and topics of the International Space Resource conference, and supports the view that a two-part conference should be organized, one in Luxembourg in close encounter with the Space Resources Week and one within the margins of the Legal Subcommittee. The Netherlands considers input from stakeholders not being Members of the Committee essential for the proper development of a regime for space resources activities. As already mentioned during the LSC, the Netherlands is prepared to make a financial contribution to the first part of the conference which will be held in Luxembourg.
16. As space is now an indispensable part in our daily lives and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community needs clear rules and a forum where dialogue is possible to develop a global consensus. We believe COPUOS and UNOOSA should continue to play an important role in this context and the Netherlands will continue to support the activities in this arena.

Thank you for your attention.