

Statement of the Republic of Türkiye
Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views

63rd Session of the Legal Sub-Committee (LSC)
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Vienna, 15 – 26 April 2024

Chair,

Let me at the outset express our gratitude to Ms. Majaja for her successful term during the South African chairmanship and congratulate you Mr. Carulla, on your election as our new Chair. You can rest assured of Türkiye's full support and cooperation. Our thanks also go to the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), to the Director Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini and her team, not only for the excellent preparation of this Session, but also for fulfilling multiple challenging tasks with limited resources.

Distinguished Chair and Delegates,

Strengthening space governance to maintain a safe and sustainable outer space for the benefit of present and future generations is our common goal.

Türkiye, as one of the few countries which ratified all the five UN treaties on outer space, including the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, believes that these five UN treaties constitute the cornerstone of international law on outer space.

In this context, we would like to reiterate the importance of the states' commitment to the basic principles stipulated in these treaties, including the Outer Space Treaty. We call upon those who have not yet done so, to sign and ratify all the five UN treaties, and invite all countries to implement them in full, in order to ensure a safe, secure, sustainable and peaceful outer space for all.

Chair,

We believe that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), its Subcommittees and Working Groups, as the main platforms for the discussions on peaceful use of outer space and development of international law in this field, play a pivotal role in regulating and managing outer space activities.

In this context, we would like to express Türkiye's full support to the important efforts of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities and thank Mr. Misztal and Mr. Freeland for their work.

Chair,

Regarding discussions on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, we believe that the authorized body is COPUOS, which takes decisions on consensus by all its member states.

We also believe that the technical mandate of COPUOS and its Subcommittees should be strictly preserved, also with respect to the work on potential legal models for space resource-related activities. As the maritime law, "airspace" law and "outer space" law have different dynamics and are regulated by different regimes, bodies and instruments, the attempts to impose these irrelevant regimes/instruments that are not on "outer space", in other words which are out of the scope and mandate of COPUOS, have no basis and thus should be precluded.

Moreover, we are of the opinion that building elements for the governance of space resource or lunar activities are already present in the five basic UN treaties on outer space. It is the duty of our Subcommittee and the related Working Group to further elaborate them.

Chair,

Türkiye is supporting discussions on the development of a space traffic management system and the space debris problem. International efforts for monitoring and active debris removal should be increased. Türkiye can contribute to active debris removal efforts with the development of low-cost hybrid propulsion space tugs.

Regarding the forthcoming Summit of the Future, Türkiye follows closely the ongoing efforts in New York and hopes that the Summit will play a crucial role in elevating outer space issues on the international agenda and enhancing space governance. Furthermore, Türkiye believes that the Pact for the Future should aim at fostering a peaceful, safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space by facilitating the implementation of the Space2030 Agenda.

Distinguished Chair and Delegates,

Please also allow me to use this opportunity to give a brief overview about Türkiye's activities in space field.

While there are several space actors in Türkiye, within government, academy, space industry and research development agencies, a dedicated body, namely Turkish Space Agency, (TUA) was established by a Presidential Decree in 2018, to regulate the space-related activities, in a unified manner.

The Decree has given TUA, administrative, technical, planning and regulatory tasks, for the development and regulation of space activities. TUA, among others, is also responsible for performing registration tasks in accordance with the UN Registration Convention, developing scientific and technological infrastructures, human resources and capabilities in the field of aeronautics and space technologies, and monitoring developments in international space law, collaborating with equivalent organizations abroad and performing any kind of tasks concerning space law, including drafting legislation.

In addition to the aforementioned Presidential Decree, the Strategy Document for the National Space Program announced in 2022, is another important document. The Program, which is also available on TUA's web page, provides the basis for the current and future space-related activities of Türkiye. Moreover, the work is also underway to draft a space law that will provide a stronger basis for leading, monitoring and regulating national space activities.

Chair,

As a landmark achievement in our National Space Program, the first Turkish Astronaut Alper GEZERAVCI returned from ISS on Ax-3 mission in February 2024, after completing 13

scientific experiments successfully in only 14 days. He is currently engaged with awareness raising activities, especially among the youth. Türkiye will continue human spaceflight activities with our second Astronaut Tuva Cihangir ATASEVER, who will conduct a sub-orbital flight in the upcoming months.

Chair,

“Space Awareness and Human Resource Development” is one of the 10 main goals of the Turkish National Space Program. In this context, TUA has been providing scholarships for Masters and Phd. studies, including in the space law and raising awareness about the Turkish space activities and space law, among the Turkish educational institutions. In recent years, Turkish universities have initiated Space Law courses and workshops, while Turkish teams actively engage in the European Rounds of the annual Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition. Notably, a Turkish team was honored with Best Memorial Award in last year’s European rounds and also received honorable mention this year.

To increase the interest of young generations in the aerospace domain, TEKNOFEST Aerospace Festival, featuring various competitions focusing on aerospace technology, has been organized since 2018. In 2023, TEKNOFEST took place in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, attracting millions of visitors. Various model rocket, CANSAT and similar high technology competitions, with international participation, were held. TEKNOFEST 2024 will be held in Adana, Türkiye, welcoming international participation once again.

Moreover, various scientific events are being organized to this extent. While İstanbul University hosted the 3rd Space Economy, Space Law, and Space Sciences Conference in May 2023, the 4th Space Economy, Space Law, and Space Sciences Conference will also be hosted in May 2024, in İstanbul, Türkiye.

Chair,

Türkiye values international cooperation in also space domain. Joint activities with international space organizations including United Nations bodies, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF), International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and others continue. Türkiye was

recognized as a new member of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) in the 17th annual meeting of the Committee, organized in October 2023. Moreover, in cooperation with the Organization of Turkic States, various space activities have been initiated for raising awareness and human capacity development. A CubeSat remote sensing mission and a space camp training for young students are among these activities. Türkiye hosted an aerospace summer camp for junior high school students in August 2023, in Bursa. Such trainings will also be conducted in 2024 and in the upcoming years. Turkish Space Agency will also host Space Technology Conference (STC) in 2024 in Ankara, and welcomes all relevant stakeholders to this scientific cooperation event. Additionally, during the International Astronautical Congress, held in Baku last year, Türkiye was selected as the host country for IAC 2026, which will be held in Antalya.

Chair,

We would like to reiterate that Türkiye is open to cooperation in every aspect of space field from regulation to technical operations. Türkiye believes that the problems surrounding space activities can only be solved jointly, in a cooperative manner by Member States, where COPUOS has a primary role.

I thank you, Chair.