Statement by Pakistan

61st Session of the Scientific & Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS);

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Agenda Item No. 04: General Exchange of Views

Thank you Chair

We would like to join other delegations in expressing our felicitations to you on becoming the new Chair of this Subcommittee and assure you of our full support and cooperation for a very productive session that will advance the cause of peaceful uses of outer space.

We also recognize the work done by the Secretariat in preparation of this current session of the subcommittee.

Chair,

We would like to reaffirm our belief that space is the common heritage of humankind and is not subject to national appropriation by claims of sovereignty. It should be used for peaceful purposes and should remain accessible to all nations on non-discriminatory basis, irrespective of their level of scientific, technical or economic development. In accordance with this belief, Pakistan has ratified all five United Nations space treaties governing the peaceful uses and long term sustainability of outer space.

Also, as a space emerging nation, the prime focus of Pakistan's national space programme is the pursuit of sustainable socio-economic progress. In this regard, I am happy to share that Pakistan has recently formulated and approved a national space policy which will provide the framework for effectively harnessing space technologies and applications towards this objective. The policy has been prepared in

line with and to ensure adherence to relevant international instruments and standards, fostering peaceful uses and contributing to responsible and sustainable use of outer space.

In addition, presently, Pakistan has three operational satellites in space. These include two remote sensing satellites, PRSS-1 and PakTES-1, and one communication satellite which is being operated to support intelligent, autonomous communications architectures that facilitate end to end information delivery from space directly to users. The data acquired through these satellites is being used in diverse fields such as urban planning, transport, water resource management, agriculture, public health, disaster management, as well as environmental pollution and climate change.

Chair,

Training and development of requisite human resources through national efforts and international cooperation is an important part of our strategy to build capacity for effective use of space technologies and applications for sustainable development. Moreover, sustained efforts are undertaken to promote awareness about space among masses, especially youth through space exhibitions, seminars and workshops.

Pakistan is also engaged in robust international collaboration for promoting the peaceful uses of outer space through its membership of several international organisations, bilateral agreements and MoUs, and participation in space-related seminars, conferences and workshops around the world.

Even as more and more actors turn to space, including private sector entities, the space divide – the gap between the advanced space-faring countries and the developing countries with limited or no access to space technologies – not only persists but could also widen. The aspiration to use outer space for progress and prosperity on earth will remain unfulfilled if the issue of space divide remains unaddressed. This august forum must play its due role in addressing this challenge.

Chair,

Pakistan greatly values the work being carried out by the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) which has contributed to sustainable development by promoting cooperation in matters related satellite-based

positioning, navigation and timing. GNSS technologies have become an integral part of our societies and economies. Pakistan recognizes that satellite navigation systems are playing an indispensable role in socioeconomic growth and sustainable development,and attaches great importance to GNSS applications. Pakistan has long been participating in the ICG's meetings as an observer.

In order to further enhance its cooperation with the ICG, Pakistan applied for its membership in 2021. Our application was strongly supported by all members of the Committee on its technical merits except for one member which refused to join consensus for extraneous, political reasons.

Pakistan believes that the ICG is a purely technical body whose work stands to benefit from the participation of countries that have growing GNSS capabilities. The ICG will not be able to pursue its stated objectives effectively if countries, which can contribute to its technical work, continue to be excluded for short-sighted political point scoring. We hope that technical considerations will retain merit and Pakistan can finally join this important platform at the earliest.

Chair,

Pakistan has been a strong and consistent proponent of the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space. We are against the militarization and weaponization of outer space in all its possible manifestations. Space is the common heritage of humankind and all nations must desist from actions which can lead to its militarization. It is disappointing to note that countries are already treating space as a war-fighting domain and building relevant military capabilities.

Similarly, anti-satellite tests, not least because of their debris generating effect, remain a matter of grave concern. We believe that there is a need to address gaps in the international space laws with a view to ensuring that no one threatens peaceful activities and applications of space technologies for socio-economic development. In the absence of strong legal instruments, other states could also follow suit. Pakistan supports all international efforts aimed at strengthening the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

Chair,

Lastly, we look forward to a fruitful exchange of views among member states during this important session of the subcommittee.

I thank you

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