

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

(Agenda Item 4: General Exchange of Views)

61ST SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE (STSC) OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (COPUOS)

(29 January-9 February 2023, Vienna)

Thank you, Chairperson,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election and express our full support and cooperation. I would like to express our gratitude to the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) for the preparation of this Session. I also welcome the new UNOOSA Director, Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini and extend our best wishes for the Director and her team, in their future endeavors.

Chair,

The growth in space activities, both in quantity and quality, has increased the importance of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in regulating and managing space activities, as well as the crucial role of the UNOOSA in executing space-related programs. The need for the space-related services is growing, evident in areas such as communications, navigation, disaster management, climate change monitoring, geospatial services and many others.

Türkiye, has been expanding its space activities in recent years, achieving significant milestones as part of its National Space Program.

Under the “*Turkish Astronaut and Science Mission Program*”, two candidates have completed their training. Alper Gezeravcı, Türkiye’s first astronaut, stepped on the International Space Station around one week ago, to conduct scientific experiments for two weeks, which will absolutely inspire young generations and increase awareness in Türkiye, about the importance of space science and technology. This program has also provided an excellent opportunity to expand international collaboration in the space field.

Secondly, under the “*Turkish Satellite-Based Navigation Program*”, the project to develop a rubidium-based atomic clock and validate it on a CubeSat mission is ongoing. The engineering model of the atomic clock has been developed, undergoing various qualification tests on the ground. The CubeSat carrying the atomic clock is also in the development stage.

Thirdly, under the “*Moon Research Program*”, a space vehicle to orbit the Moon and make a hard landing on the Lunar surface is in the critical design stage. In December 2023, newly developed hybrid spacecraft propulsion system has undergone testing in near vacuum environment.

Fourthly, Turkish aerospace industry continues to develop new satellites, with three newly developed CubeSats launched into Low Earth Orbit in the last quarter of 2023. Additionally, new remote sensing studies aimed at disaster management and environmental monitoring are ongoing. New working groups, with participation from relevant authorities, have been established to manage and mitigate disasters with possible contributions from the space technology.

Fifthly, 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 festival will be held in Adana, Türkiye, welcoming international participation once again.

Chair,

Türkiye values international cooperation for the socio-economic development of countries. 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. In addition to these, Turkish Space Agency will 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. IAC 2026 will take place in Antalya, Türkiye.

Regarding work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, Türkiye would like to express its support for the ongoing work of the respective Working Group. Türkiye believes that emerging challenges, as well as current ones, should be dealt with in a cooperative manner. Space science and technology, particularly human spaceflight activities should be utilized to the greatest extent possible to promote peace between Nations. In-space maneuvers related to conjunction risks and other needs should be coordinated and harmonized in a timely manner. Trackability of space objects should be improved with clearly defined standards and guidelines. UN satellite registration system should be upgraded to an active online system, possibly with database functionalities. Capacity building efforts in the space object tracking field should be promoted, contributing to the peaceful exploration of outer space. The de-orbit mechanisms and active debris removal research and activities should be given high priority at the national and international level for the availability of orbital resources for current and future generations.

Chair,

We would like to point out 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.

Thank you Chair.