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English only

Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Sixty-first session
Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2024
Item 13 of the provisional agenda*
Space and global health

Report on the meetings of the Space and Global Health Network held on the margins of the sixty-first session of the Subcommittee

Prepared by the Coordinator of the Space and Global Health Network

1.   At its sixty-fifth session in 2022, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space endorsed the agreement of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that the Space and Global Health Network should provide annual reports to the Subcommittee through its Coordinator (A/77/20, para. 168). In 2023, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agreed to invite the Network to participate as an observer in the sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees (A/AC.105/1279, para. 238).

2.   As part of its work, the Space and Global Health Network held two meetings, in hybrid format, on the 5 and 6 February on the margins of the sixty-first session of the Subcommittee. More than 50 participants attended the meetings, including participants from both the space and health sectors, space agencies, academia and international organizations, including the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the World Health Organization.

3.   The objectives were to start the preparation of a medium/long term plan of work and advance on the implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly resolution 77/120 and the United Nations/World Health Organization International Conference on Space and Global Health (A/AC.105/1306), in particular:

       (a)   Design of a curriculum on space and global health. Successful examples of multidisciplinary capacity-building efforts bridging space and health were discussed, and it was recognized that additional efforts to identify existing materials and gaps were needed in order to create novel material. Participants discussed several use cases to drive capacity-building and awareness-raising efforts;

       (b)   Identification and description of space-based essential health variables (S-EHVs). It was discussed that the S-EHVs could serve as a basis for requirements

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       * A/AC.105/C.1/L.412

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for new satellites. The work on the S-EHVs was deemed relevant for the creation of the curriculum and coordination efforts will be needed;

(c)   Organizational and technical interoperability in the field of space and global health. Participants recognized the need to advance further in terms of organizational and technical interoperability. During the meetings the focus was on technical interoperability and two pathways were identified. The first one on the need to identify data frameworks, policies, data types, sources and standards and the second one to leverage existing work within the United Nations in the field of interoperability.

4.   The emergence of artificial intelligence applications and their use of data was also discussed and proposed as an aspect to be investigated under the umbrella of interoperability.

5.   The meetings were prefaced by a discussion on the methods of work and the potential creation of dedicated task forces to drive the work devoted to those aforementioned topics, noting the overlaps and synergies between them. The Space and Global Health Network will identify experts to join the task forces to work on the aforementioned objectives through calls for interest and other means.

6.   The Space Global Health Network agreed to have their next meeting in the margin of the sixty-seventh session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This does not preclude other meetings to take place in conjunction with the upcoming events listed in A/AC.105/C.1/CRP.29.

7.   Delegations and Members of the Space and Global Health Network are invited to disseminate the information concerning the activities of the Space and Global Network and to identify relevant institutions or experts to join the network through the signature of the statement of intent (https://sgh.network/statement-of-intent/) and submit it to info@gdhub.org.

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