

Norwegian statement, 61st meeting of COPUOS June 2018

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

It is a great pleasure for Norway to take the floor for the first time in COPUOS as a full-fledged member. We wish to thank all delegations for supporting our membership application.

International space developments and activities are growing at a dramatic rate, which confirms that we must be vigilant and proactive in the important work taking place in multilateral forums like the UN's COPUOS.

It is in the interest of the entire global community to protect the space environment for future generations. The UN is a cornerstone in Norway's foreign policy, and a vital component in our endeavour to protect our interests in areas such as international law, peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian assistance. To achieve this, Norway fully supports the UN's role in fostering cooperation among states on issues related to space.

It is against this backdrop that Norway, as a staunch supporter of upholding international law, concluded that the time was ripe to join COPUOS - perhaps somewhat long overdue. We recognise that we have responsibilities that go beyond our national borders. Outer space must continue to be a global common good, something that will be used for the benefit of all humankind.

With an increased number of participants in space activities, international coordination, and an adherence to common rules is crucial. As a maritime and Polar nation, we recognize that satellites are an essential tool in numerous areas. The list is long, and includes fishing, shipping and offshore sectors, telecommunications, navigation, weather forecast, research, as well as for search and rescue operations.

Norway's space policy focuses on social benefits, industrial development, research and user needs. Through international cooperation and national initiatives, Norway aims to use space for the benefit of sustainable development

in the Arctic. At the same time, the mere fact that our country has thriving communities in the far North, provides a possibility to facilitate state of the art satellite services which are of interest globally. As a member of ESA and a full participant in the European Union's space programmes, we are working on ensuring coverage of satellite systems in the Arctic.

The satellite station in Svalbard, which is combined with similar services in Queen Maud Land in Antarctica, an upcoming satellite communications system for the Arctic, a maritime microsatellite constellation with a focus on the north, and the "spaceport" on the Arctic island of Andøya are national initiatives to support space in the Polar regions. Norway has extensive ongoing research concerning space weather, climate change, Arctic ice, and oceanography and we wholeheartedly welcome and facilitate international cooperation in all of these fields. In 2015 Norway established The Svalbard Integrated Earth Observation System – SIOS. This organization coordinates the international research communities space related activities in Svalbard.

As a long and firm supporter of the UN, Norway is considering additional ways of contributing to the 2030 agenda. Through our participation in the REDD+ initiative, which aims at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, we have experienced how useful space derived data has proven to be for mapping tropical forests. This has inspired further considerations as to how space tools can be utilized as a mechanism to achieve the sustainable development goals and aims set forth in the Paris Agreement.

Currently, Norway has four microsatellites operational in low Earth orbit, four commercial telecommunications satellites in geostationary orbit and one in graveyard orbit. Plans to launch new satellites in the near future are currently under development.

Norway has for many years been a partner in the International Space Station. Since this great activity is gradually coming to an end, we are actively taking part in discussions about what should be humankind's next common goal in outer space.

The Norwegian Government is in the process of creating a new national space strategy, which we intend shall reflect modern realities. We also have set in motion a project on developing a new space law, and are greatly interested to hear other countries experiences or plans regarding their own legislation.

The United Nations is undoubtedly the foremost arena to foster cooperation on space issues among all countries in the world. We look forward to participating in the discussion on the future regulatory framework in this field.

As one of the newest members of this committee we look forward to cooperate with the rest of the international community in contributing to the important work taking place in COPUOS and its sub-committees, in addition to working groups and other configurations that may be created in the years ahead.

Thank you very much, Chair.

