



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 25 AUGUST – 3 SEPTEMBER 2021, DELIVERED BY H.E. ALEJANDRO SOLANO ORTIZ, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COSTA RICA

AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to reiterate our full cooperation and support in discharge of your responsibilities as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).
2. The Group further takes the opportunity to thank the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo, for her opening remarks, and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations made for this session.
3. The Group welcomes the applications submitted by Angola, Bangladesh, Slovenia and Panama to join the membership of the Committee. The steady growth of COPUOS in recent years is a clear sign of the international recognition of the unique role of COPUOS. In this regard, the Group both welcomes and encourages the participation of observers in the Committee and its Subcommittees as this contributes to greater engagement with the activities of COPUOS. It is important that more Member States of the United Nations be welcomed as this contributes to the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space.
4. The Group underscores its firm conviction that the use and exploration of the outer space shall be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes, with the view to realizing a shared vision for the future, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and in conformity with the body of applicable international law.
5. Universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination, regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development as well as the equitable and rational use of the outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all humankind, the principle of non-appropriation of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, by any means, international cooperation in the development of space activities especially those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, taking in Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, are the most important principles that should govern the activities in outer Space.
6. The Group reaffirms the importance of preventing an arms race in outer space and placement of weapons of any kind in outer space and calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the peaceful use of outer space to prevent an arms race there and to refrain from placement of weapons of any kind in outer space and any other actions contrary to that objective. In this regard, the Group notes that transparency and confidence building measures could play a useful role. The

Group believes that preservation of outer space in the long term requires the international community to ensure that no weapons will ever be placed there.

7. Developing countries are increasingly engaged in space activities and actively participating in the discussions of the Committee. While several Member States of this Group have achieved important milestones in space activities, others are starting to develop their own space programmes and policies. This fact affirms our recognition of the potential, importance and impact of space activities.

8. In this connection, it is imperative to intensify the efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived from outer space activities with a view to promoting the contribution of peaceful uses of outer space to socio-economic development. In line with the enhancement of international cooperation in outer space activities, it is vital to promote a wider participation of developing countries through active assistance by advanced space-faring nations and the Office of Outer Space Affairs. To this end, capacity building and technical assistance are key factors in the expansion of the abilities of those working in the field, allowing them to gain expertise and knowledge from more advanced spacefaring nations.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to comment on some of the issues put forth during the 58th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and that we consider of utmost relevance for developing countries.

2. The unfavorable financial situation of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, has limited its capacity-building activities. UNOOSA is affected by a shortage of funds to support cooperation programmes. Nevertheless, the Group would like to note with appreciation activities carried out in 2020, under the Programme on Space Applications by the UNOOSA in collaboration with Member States and other international organizations.

3. With regard to the technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, the Group would like to reiterate the fact that the geostationary orbit, a limited natural resource clearly in danger of saturation, needs to be used in a way that ensures countries have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

4. The issue of space debris, its proliferation and removal, continue to be a cause for concern in the space. The Group therefore is of the view that the potential hazards posed by the collision of debris with space objects and the consequences of the contamination of outer space cannot be underestimated. It is also important that new space actors are not burdened due to the historical activities of established space actors. The Group would also like to emphasize the challenges caused by placement of mega constellations in low-Earth orbit, including those related to sustainable use of orbit and frequencies, and believes addressing these challenges should be a priority in the work of COPUOS.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Space science and technology, and their applications are essential in effectively addressing current and future challenges to social and economic development and sustainability, such as natural disasters, food security, climate change and natural resource security. The Group notes in this regard that space activities are also crucial to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular as part of efforts to support sustainable economic growth, improve quality of life and manage the global environment. It is therefore important to ensure that the Office is equipped with the necessary resources to assist a greater number of countries in having access to the benefits of space science and technology and its applications in line with the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty.

6. The Group would like to highlight the importance of science and technology dissemination in bridging the space divide. The Group therefore calls upon the Committee and UNOOSA for greater support to the training programs of the regional centers affiliated to the United Nations, and to conduct wider exchange and cooperation among different regional centers, including through alliance of regional centers, with the aim of enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation to empower the development of technology among nations. The Group also calls upon UNOOSA and Member States to make available more opportunities for academic networking, long-term fellowships and collaboration with national and regional institutions in the field of outer space especially in developing countries.

7. The Group welcomes the election of Mr. Umamaheswaran from India as the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and looks forward to fruitful deliberations on this timely and pertinent issue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

AGENDA ITEM 7: REPORT OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS SIXTIETH SESSION

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to comment on some issues discussed during the last session of the Legal Subcommittee which the Group deems of utmost relevance for developing countries.

2. The Group underscores once again that the definition and delimitation of outer space is a very important topic that should be kept on the agenda of this Subcommittee and that more work should be done in order to establish the legal regime applicable to airspace and outer space. In this regard, we commend all the efforts made by the Chair of the Working on Definition and delimitation of Outer Space and encourage all delegations to contribute to the discussion in a constructive manner.

3. Regarding the issue of geostationary orbit, the Group would like to reiterate that such a domain shall not be subject to national appropriation, by means of use, repeated use or occupation, or by any other means, and that its utilization is governed by applicable international law. Furthermore, we reiterate that this orbit needs to be used rationally, efficiently and economically, in conformity with the provision of the international space laws and relevant regulations, so that countries or groups of countries may have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

4. The Group considers that capacity building in space law is a fundamental tool that should be enhanced through international cooperation. Therefore, the Group calls for a greater support by UNOOSA and Member States to foster both North-South and South-

South cooperation to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise in the field of international space law.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group believes that the 'Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries' is important as it further promotes international cooperation in a bid to maximize the benefits in the utilization of space applications for all States and calls on all space-faring nations to contribute to promoting and fostering international cooperation on an equitable basis. It also underscores that particular attention be given to the interests of developing countries and that the Committee should be strengthened in its role as the main platform for the exchange of information in the field of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space.

6. Considering the essential roles of space objects, regardless of their size, in the socioeconomic development of the Member States, the Group is of the view that the Committee and its Subcommittees should not create an ad-hoc legal regime or any other mechanisms, which might impose limitations on designing, building, launching and using of space objects. The Group is of the view that in general, all international rights and obligations of the States with respect to satellites regardless of their perceived sizes are equally relevant for the conduct of space activities with the use of small satellites.

7. The Group also welcomes the decision to establish a Working Group under the Legal Subcommittee agenda item "General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources" and looks forward to fruitful deliberations on this timely and pertinent issue in accordance with rules of procedures, methods of work and established practice of the Committee. The Group believes that all countries need to engage in this discussion in COPUOS to propose constructive ways that help us develop an approach for the utilization of space resources in line with the principles enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty, that is constructive, collaborative and the product of consensus.

8. The Group is of the view that in light of the increasing participation and the evolving potential of the private sector in space activities, the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument that clearly defines and guides commercial activities in outer space could play an important role in expanding the use of outer space and stimulate space activities for the benefit of humanity. The Group considers that, besides the need for a broad debate about the implications of these activities, the developing countries shall not be excluded from the benefits of space exploration and their rights shall be considered in the discussion.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.