

Check against delivery

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – General Debate**  
**Statement by Austria**  
**Ambassador Gabriela Sellner**  
**31 May 2021**

**Sixtieth Session of the Legal Subcommittee  
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

Mme Chair,

Let me first warmly welcome you as the Chair of this Subcommittee. We are confident that our work during this session of the Subcommittee will greatly benefit from your skills and experience. I would also like to express through you, our gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo and her able and dedicated team for the preparation of this session. Austria is pleased that the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Legal Subcommittee can take place in a hybrid format that assures the continuation of our discussions.

Let me start with the **Space2030 Agenda**: Austria appreciates the work of the Bureau of the *Space2030 agenda Working Group*. The following aspects of the agenda are very important for Austria and we very much hope that we will be able to complete the work on the Space 2030 Agenda this year and that it can be presented to the General Assembly for approval.

The following topics are of importance for Austria:

The agenda addresses **long-term sustainability of space activities** and the current challenges in the space sector, such as the increasing congestion of the space environment due to the growing number of space activities. These issues clearly require a **multilateral approach**. We therefore commend the 58<sup>th</sup> STSC for having approved a Chair to the *Working Group on Long Term Sustainability* and look forward to the substantive work of this important group.

Increased **international cooperation** between Member States and **enhanced dialogue** with intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as with industry and private sector entities, will be crucial to deliver on the Space2030 agenda. This equally applies to new topics for which there is not yet a working group or plan for further action, such as **space resources** and even further away **Space Traffic Management**.

**Austria thanks Germany and Finland for their efforts and with regard to the proposal to establish a Working Group on the issue of potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.**

**Austria wholeheartedly supports the establishment of the Working Group at the current session of the Legal Subcommittee.**

**Austria would like to underline that the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS as the prime multilateral body with the mandate to promote the development of international space law is the forum in which the potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources are to be discussed and developed**

We consider the **global governance of space activities** an essential element of the future Space2030 agenda. Therefore, Austria strongly supports the efforts of the Committee in promoting international cooperation in the space domain and any activities to open up the dialogue of UNOOSA (the *United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs*), the COPUOS (*Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space*) and its subcommittees to different actors and stakeholders. This enhances the responsiveness to new realities regarding space activities.

The constant increase in space debris is already a challenge for the safe and sustainable conduct of space activities. In addition to the mitigation of space debris, the **remediation of space debris** is an issue of great importance for Austria as well. The use of space debris remediation technologies raises several legal issues, such as the jurisdiction and control of states over space objects registered by them and the liability for damages caused by space debris mitigation activities. These and other issues need to be discussed at an international level and this subcommittee has a crucial role to play.

Last but not least, let me turn to another crucial element for us, which is the **significant role of space technology, applications and data in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.**

In this context, let me inform you about two major space-related events that Austria together with UNOOSA is hosting and organising in 2021:

From 6 to 9 December, Austria and UNOOSA will host **the 3rd edition of the World Space Forum** at the Vienna International Center (VIC) on the topic "**Space4Climate Action**". First information and the programme at a glance can be found on the Office's website. This forum

- launched in 2019 acts as a discussion and networking platform bringing together all major actors in space, including scientific institutions, governmental bodies, NGOs as well as industries and individuals from the private sector. The event directly supports SDG 13 (“*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*”).

From 7 to 9 September, **the UN/Austria Symposium 2021** will take place in an online format. The programme and links for registration can be found on the Office's website. Titled "***Space Applications for Food Systems***", the discussion will focus on how space technologies support food systems and, in particular, promote sustainable production. The event will contribute to the activities around the *UN Food Systems Summit* convened by the UN Secretary-General and will show the benefit of space technologies in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-framework, in particular to reach SDG 2 (“*Sustainable Food for All*”).

Let me draw your attention to a **technical presentation on Legal Issues to Planetary Defence: Legal Overview and Assessment** on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 5 pm (CEST). This Assessment was published in Conference Room Paper 10 to the 58<sup>th</sup> STSC and was prepared by the *Ad-Hoc Working Group on Legal Issues of the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group SMAG*. It describes the existing legal context, in particular international law, relevant to the work of SMPAG; formulates and prioritizes relevant legal questions and issues requiring clarification. It finally suggests possible ways forward to deal with legal questions.

We would like to cordially invite you to an event organized by the *Austrian National Contact Point of the European Center for Space Law*: „***The role of private actors in shaping national space law and policy – dynamics and stumbling blocks***“. The event will take place on Monday, 7 June 2021, 6 pm (CEST) as an online event. We will share the link later in the week.

Finally, let me emphasise that it is very important for Austria to strengthen the *Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space* and its subcommittees as the prime international forum for multilateral cooperation in the space sector and for the development of international norms and standards to govern peaceful space activities. In this sense, we are convinced that the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the *Legal Subcommittee* will be productive and rewarding.

In concluding, allow me to underline that the Austrian delegation will continue to provide strong support to the work and deliberations of this Subcommittee. In this spirit, we are convinced that the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Legal Subcommittee will be successful.

Thank You!