

**COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE
Legal Subcommittee – Sixtieth session
Vienna, 31 May – 11 June 2021**

**Agenda Item 3: General Exchange of Views
Canada**

Madam Chair,

The Canadian Delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the Legal Subcommittee. Canada is confident that the Legal Subcommittee will have a very successful virtual session this year under your able guidance. The Canadian Delegation would also like to express its gratitude to Mr. Misztal for his work at the helm of the Legal Subcommittee during the 57th and 58th sessions. Since the last meeting of the Legal Subcommittee, there have been many exciting developments in the exploration and use of outer space. At this year's Legal Subcommittee, we will have the opportunity to discuss the legal issues relevant to these developments. With your guidance, this Subcommittee can make a significant contribution towards a better understanding of the legal framework governing the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Canada will support your efforts to make this year's session a success.

Madam Chair,

Over the past year, we have witnessed some exciting missions and unprecedented collaborations in the exploration and use of outer space, even as our planet has grappled with and suffered great losses due to the continuing COVID pandemic that has necessitated this virtual meeting of the Legal Subcommittee.

Three missions to Mars that were launched in 2020 arrived at their destination this year. Rendez-vous and sample return missions to the Moon and asteroids continue to make exciting progress. A group of States, including Canada, committed to the construction and operation of a Lunar Gateway Space Station, a stepping stone to future missions to the Moon and Mars. It is with these future missions in mind that Canada joined seven other countries in signing the Artemis Accords in October 2020; there are now eight signatories with another State recently signing on. The Artemis Accords signaled an understanding between the space agencies of the signatories to adhere to a set of principles to ensure safe, sustainable space activities in full compliance with the Outer Space Treaty. The Artemis Accords are not the end but rather provide a foundation to begin the discussion around a framework for such deep-space activities so that we can ensure that space remains free for exploration and use for the benefit of all humankind. On June 2nd, Canada will join other signatories in an informal panel session to discuss the Artemis Accords and answer your questions.

Non-governmental entities have also continued to make great strides over the past few years. The cadence of private launches continues to accelerate with more commercial launch service providers operating, or preparing to operate, from an ever-expanding list of countries. Private companies are now playing a larger role in launching humans into Earth orbit, and eventually beyond, and we are also seeing the expansion of satellite constellations continue as companies deployed multiple batches of small satellites into Earth orbit.

As we reflect upon these new and exciting developments, it is important to recall that the legal foundation within which all of these space activities operate is the four core United Nations Treaties on outer space: the Outer Space Treaty; the Rescue Agreement; the Liability Convention; and, the Registration Convention. Canada recognizes the crucial importance of these treaties and strongly supports their universal adherence and national implementation. As is evident in the developments over the past few years, these treaties have enabled States and non-governmental entities to pursue innovative new technologies and programs that have fostered the growth of a global space economy and delivered tremendous socio-economic benefits to all humankind. Understanding the legal principles in these treaties and how they apply to current and planned space activities is key to their national implementation and our continued exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. No matter how novel or innovative certain space activities may seem, the core United Nations Treaties apply to such activities and can successfully guide participants towards peaceful and useful results. Constellations of satellites, regardless of the size and number, are still space objects that must be registered. Liability still follows the launching State, whether a private company or a State conducts the launch, and a sample return mission or the extraction of water from deposits on the Moon or Mars are both uses of outer space. Therefore, this Subcommittee should continue its efforts to promote the widest possible adherence to the treaties to ensure that humanity continues to enjoy the benefits derived from the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, including celestial bodies.

Madam Chair,

In this and future sessions, the Legal Subcommittee should continue its useful work by addressing the legal aspects of new and evolving issues that present opportunities and challenges for humankind's exploration and use of outer space. These issues include the deployment of large constellations of satellites, space traffic management, sustainable space presence, space resource utilization and debris remediation. It is the sincere hope of the Canadian Delegation that deliberations at this year's session will continue to contribute to the Legal Subcommittee's record of delivering practical legal guidance that enables the international community to pursue exciting new outer space adventures.

Thank you Madam Chair.