

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

*Sixtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Vienna, 31 May to 11 June 2021*

**STATEMENT BY
SIMONETTA DI PIPPO
DIRECTOR
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS (UNOOSA)**

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, I thank you for the opportunity to address this session on the work of the Office. I would like to assure you Madame Chair of our commitment to assist you in running the meetings. We are very pleased to see this session going ahead despite the present pandemic COVID-19 situation. Last year we had to cancel the fifty-ninth session due to the alarming pandemic situation at that time. We are steadily moving towards normality in our intergovernmental work and that is a very positive sign.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

The COVID-19 situation in 2020 and 2021 lead the Office to maximize its capacity in using virtual platforms and alternative outreach mechanisms. The demand for services UNOOSA provides to Member States continues to expand. From legal advisory services, to guidance on space object registration or hands-on capacity building through several cross-cutting programmatic activities either under our regular budget or with voluntary funding in close partnership with Member States and other actors.

In this context, we are increasingly building up several activities with partners, including the Space Law for New Space Actors Project, Access to Space for All initiative, Space Economy Initiative, Promoting Space Sustainability Project, and the space debris infographics and podcasts. The well established World Space Forum serves an important role in fostering dialogue within the full spectrum of space science, technology, law and policy.

We see increased interest of Member States to use space responsibly, sustainably and in support of their national development needs. Today, stakeholders around the world are accessing the space environment with substantial investments in space activities. With an increasing evolution of new actors, there is a need to enhance efforts to raise awareness of, and adherence to, the existing normative framework governing space activities. Our concerted efforts endeavour to assist States in their further development of national space programmes and supporting regulatory frameworks.

This increasing attention and interest on space affairs is also mirrored internally within the UN system. In this context, last year saw UNOOSA's responsibilities become even more closely linked to the work of the UN Secretary-General with ST/SGB/2020/1 of 13 January

2020. The Office's Director is fully accountable to the Secretary-General and serves as the Secretary-General's senior adviser on outer space affairs.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

As delegations are aware, the Office for Outer Space Affairs discharges the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the treaties and principles on outer space. This is separate from the depository function and deals with the substantive responsibilities assigned to the Secretary-General.

With regard to the United Nations Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Office is pleased to note that, in 2020, 1,260 functional and 34 non-functional space objects were registered with the Secretary-General by Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and the European Space Agency.

As States are aware, this is a substantial increase in the number of functional space objects registered in a single year: nearly four times the number registered in 2019 and almost ten times the number registered in 2011. The Office would like to note that it is actively working to meet the challenges posed by processing such a large volume within its existing resources. The Office would also like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to States of registry for the timely resolution of issues that arise during processing.

While 2020 was a record year for registration, the Office would like to inform the Subcommittee that it will be eclipsed in 2021. To date, this year, the Office has already received registration submissions for 1,024 functional and 26 non-functional space objects from Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States. Based on anticipated launches and the registration practices of States, the Office believes nearly 2,000 functional space objects may be registered by the end of this year.

In addition to a record number of registrations, notifications of 132 space object re-entries and 19 notifications of the change in status, i.e., decommissioning, changes in orbital parameters including GSO position, etc. were also provided by States in 2020. Additionally, Hungary provided a notification on the establishment of its national space object registry in accordance with Article II of the Convention.

Concerning notifications under the other treaties and principles, in 2020, the Office disseminated a notification by the United States under the NPS Principles concerning the launch of the Mars 2020 mission and disseminated information provided by the Netherlands and also the United Kingdom under Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty.

The Office also continues to serve as the United Nations focal point on re-entry of nuclear-powered space objects for the Joint Radiation Emergency Management Plan of the International Organizations.

The summary above on the status of formal actions under the treaties and principles

demonstrates the importance of further enhancing the application and implementation of obligations under the United Nations instruments on outer space. The Office would like to thank States and intergovernmental organizations for their assistance in the fulfilment of those responsibilities under the treaties and principles on outer space.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

In conclusion, let me underscore the commitment of my Office in supporting all States in continuously developing and maintaining responsible space activities through our role in discharging the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the treaties and principles on outer space, and through capacity-building and advocacy activities.

Thank you for your attention.