

Agenda item 3: General Exchange of Views – New Zealand

Thank you Chair

Tena tatou katoa. Our appreciation goes to you Chair, and the Secretariat for the hard work in preparing this session of the Legal Subcommittee under difficult circumstances. We are pleased that, despite the pandemic, this committee is able to continue its important work in a hybrid format and we are grateful for all your efforts in that regard.

In terms of domestic activity, through 2020 and 2021 New Zealand has continued the development of our space industry, and implementation of our regulatory regime for Outer Space and High-altitude Activities. To ensure that our regulatory regime keeps pace with technological, commercial and international developments, when the regime was stood up in 2016, we built in a review process to take place as soon as possible after 3 years of operation. We are shortly commencing a domestic review of the operation and effectiveness of our domestic legislation, the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act.

New Zealand is wholly committed to the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space. We see a key element of this as developing new norms and standards to maintain access to, and use, of outer space. We consider the Guidelines on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities an important tool in this regard. Accordingly, we urge all space actors to implement the guidelines and prioritise the stability and preservation of the space environment in all their space-related endeavours.

On the 1st of June, New Zealand signed the Artemis Accords. We are pleased to be able to join the Accords and become an active contributor to the group. We view the Artemis Accords as a valuable first step in ensuring the next phase of space exploration is conducted in a safe, sustainable, and transparent manner. The Artemis Accords confirm that space resource utilisation activity must be done consistently with existing international law and that a multilateral process is required to progress this issue. In that regard, we also see the Accords as a useful first step towards developing international practices and rules to contribute to multilateral efforts to this end.

New Zealand looks forward to discussions in this Committee on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources - the mineral resources in and on the moon and other celestial bodies. This is a critical issue. Space resources will be a key enabler of the next phase of space exploration, including the possibility

of sending humans to Mars. It will deepen scientific understanding, drive innovation and produce economic opportunity across the growing global space sector. This is a multilateral issue, affecting a range of stakeholders, including states, scientific and commercial actors, and civil society. This range of stakeholders must be involved in further discussions on space resource utilisation – and New Zealand sees COPUOS as uniquely well positioned to lead this work.

New Zealand is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders on these issues to ensure that the space environment will be available, and accessible, for the benefit of all, now and into the future – and we look forward to engaging in the informal consultations on this issue over the next week.

The Space2030 Agenda and Implementation plan is one of the key pieces of work for the Committee. We need to ensure that the global governance of space activities keeps pace with modern developments, including the commercial sector, so as to remain fit-for purpose and capable of meeting our contemporary needs. We have also stressed that the sustainability of the space environment should remain a key focus of the Committee, and its importance acknowledged upfront in the Agenda. We look forward to working with colleagues during informal sessions to find consensus on the agenda.

Finally, and separately to our work here, another further aspect critical to the safe and sustainable use of outer space is the articulation of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours in outer space. New Zealand was pleased to have made a submission to the UN Secretary-General articulating our initial contribution to this area, under the First Committee resolution 75/36. While existing international law provides the core regulatory framework for all activities in outer space, further specific rules, norms and standards are needed to effectively operationalise these core obligations, and develop and articulate responsible behaviours in outer space and we welcome the work being done in that regard by our colleagues in Geneva.

Thank you Chair