



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE 60TH SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE

(31 MAY 2021- 11 JUNE 2021)

UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (GEV)

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Chairperson

It is with great pleasure that the South African delegation participates in this the 60th Session of the Legal Sub-committee of the UNCOPUOS. We would also like to pledge our continued support to you as the Chairperson of this gathering.

My delegation also wishes to express our sincere appreciation for the work carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, under its Director Ms Simonetta Di Pippo in terms of preparing for this 60th Session of the LSC.

The South African delegation also aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Group of 77 and China.

Chairperson,

South Africa places great importance on the development of legal mechanisms to regulate the peaceful use, exploration and utilisation of outer space. In this regard, South Africa warmly welcomes the re-establishment of working group for LTS during the past STSC under the leadership of India. Our delegation is committed to multilateralism and we urge that the work of this working group begins soon to ensure that equality be maintained amongst all nations participating in outer space activities, irrespective of their development status. Furthermore, South Africa is keen to have partnerships in capacity building for implementation of the finalised guidelines

Chairperson,

There is an increasing number of nations participating in outer space activities and wanting to be part of its overall governance. , This is evident by the number of countries that join the committee an annual basis and the consequential exponential growth of UNCOPUOS membership over the last few years.

Consequently, the space environment in which the 5 UN treaties were negotiated has changed. However, it is important to recognise that they remain the cornerstone of the rules-based framework for maintaining responsible actions in outer space.

The South African delegation supports the establishment of the working group and a work-plan to guide the exploitation and exploration of space resources within multilateral system. My delegation supports the results-oriented discussion on an international mechanism for the management of space resources that would be based on the principles and norms codified in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty). In this regard, new emerging and developing space faring nations, as well as operators such as commercial companies and academic institutions are increasingly looking to UNCOPUOS and importantly, this sub-committee for guidance.

Chairperson,

South Africa would also like to call on all UNCOPUOS members who have signed the existing Space treaties to work within their legal prescripts and encourages those member states which have not yet done so, to also consider signing, acceding and ultimately domesticate them in national policies.

Chairperson,

South Africa is in the process of consultation with various structures of government in preparation for approval of our Space legislation, which will include relevant provisions and take into consideration domestic policies. We are proud to state that this updated legislation, expressly incorporates the legal principles and elements established by the space treaties that South Africa is a Party to as well as certain declarations and other extensive guidelines of this Committee.

In addition, the South African Council for Space Affairs (SACSA) is actively pursuing its mandate as the regulatory body for Space Affairs in South Africa, under the leadership of the Minister of Trade and Industry. In this regard, the Council recently licenced Marine Domain

Awareness (MDA) SAT1a,b &c, which is due for launch in Russia in the later part of this year and will start the process of recording this set of Cube-Sats under the UNOOSA registry.

Chairperson,

In terms of capacity building and international outreach, South Africa was n honoured to have organised the 2019 & 2020 Africa Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Competition. The Africa Round was hosted by Department of Trade and Industry supported by the South African Council for Space Affairs and the South African National Space Agency (SANSA). This event offers a platform for students, academics, legal professionals and the space community from across Africa to gain exposure on matters of international space law. In 2019, the Nigerian Calabar University won the regional competition and represented Africa at the finals in Washington DC. In 2020, we saw increased interest in participation from across the Continent, even though the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow a physical competition. I am also pleased to report that South Africa is currently organising the 2021 African Regional Round virtually due to the plaguing pandemic.

Chairperson,

In closing, allow me to once more stress that the activities of states in the extreme environment of outer space, if not governed according to multilateral processes and the rule of law, could lead to a situation of increased tension in outer space relations. Consequently, we should be guided by the existing international space treaties and the fact that outer space is a global commons for equitable exploitation and indeed protection by all nations for today, as well as for the benefit of future generations.

Chairperson

My delegation will make interventions on other agenda items and will participate and support various working groups of this sub-committee that are guiding its work and ultimately

building the future international space governance to guide the peaceful yet supportive International Legal Regime.

Thank You.

Chairperson
