

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

**Agenda Item 9: Future role and method of work of the Committee.**

**Canada**

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

Space activities are ever changing and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space must continue to evolve in order to address this dynamic mission area. In 2017, the Committee requested that the Secretariat develop proposals to improve the overall governance and the method of work of the Committee. Canada would like to thank the Secretariat for their recommendations in A/AC.105/C.1/L.384 and provides the following comments in response to those recommendations.

First and foremost, COPUOS has been successful in safeguarding the peaceful exploration and use of outer space for the benefit of all by adopting a consensus approach to decision making and, in that regard, we believe all decisions by the Committee should continue to be done by consensus.

Technical presentations are important capacity-building activities, however, as the Committee has expanded, so has the demand on the schedule and the Secretariat has made a number of recommendations to address that demand. We support the following recommendations regarding technical sessions. Technical sessions should be held over lunch for no more than 1 hour, as there are often informal working group sessions over lunch, and then again starting at 5 pm. As the lunch period will be in English only, preference for non-English presentations should be given for the 5 pm time period to allow for interpretation. We also agree there should be an equitable opportunity for all member states to provide technical presentations. Therefore we support limiting the allocation of time slots as well as limiting the presentation time to 10 minutes, for both Member States and Permanent Observers. In addition we support setting a deadline for requests for technical presentation time periods so the Secretariat has adequate time to prepare the session schedules.

Just as space is quickly evolving, so too must the work of COPUOS evolve. We support the establishment of new working groups to addressing emerging space issues, such as space resource utilization, but we need to ensure that the number of working groups remains manageable in order to ensure maximum participation by all Member States of COPUOS, especially those with smaller delegations. We also need to be mindful of the burden this places on the Secretariat – we cannot continue to ask them to support a never-ending increase in workload. In that vein, we believe that careful consideration of removing agenda items that may now be stale is key to ensuring an effective management of the COPUOS and subcommittee agendas. In addition, we agree with the suggestion that Working Groups mandates should be reviewed on a 5-year basis in order to ensure the efficient use of the limited time available during very busy sessions. Further, we support the proposal that Working Groups should meet in Plenary, prior to the technical presentations, to ensure their important work is given proper consideration with interpretation services.

Thank you for your kind attention.