

Statement – Australia

57th Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Agenda item 4 – General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities

Thank you Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Australian delegation congratulates you on your appointment as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and commends the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, the Secretariat and staff for their continued support of the Committee and subcommittees.

We also welcome the newest Committee members – the Dominican Republic, Rwanda and Singapore, which brings membership of the Committee to 95 Member States.

Australia welcomes the Committee's adoption of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and acknowledgement of the LTS Guidelines in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2019 – titled 'International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space'.

Madam Chair,

The Australian Government understands the benefits of space technologies and services, including for the lives of Australians.

It touches virtually every sector of our economy. Space capabilities are used by Australian farmers to monitor the health of their crops, scientists to study the impact of drought, and track the progress of bushfires.

Australia is grateful for the Members of the Committee and international arrangements, such as the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, which have supported Australia during the bushfires. This provided Australia with greater access to space-enabled data and services, which have played a significant role in Australia's preparation and response to the bushfires and will continue to do so, including for our recovery efforts.

2019 was a significant year for space in Australia, underpinned by the Australian Government's continued investment in space to meet its goal of tripling the size of Australia's space industry and creating up to 20,000 jobs.

The path to achieve this outcome is outlined in the *Advancing Space: Australian Civil Space Strategy*, a ten-year strategy that will ensure the benefits of space are realised, and acknowledges the importance of supporting leap-frog research and development within Australia's space industry.

To support the delivery of the Strategy, the Government has committed to grow the space sector, including funding:

- For Geoscience Australia, to develop world-leading satellite positioning infrastructure and technologies;
- For the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation to support space science in Australia; and
- to support the development of new technologies for space through a Cooperative Research Centre for Smart Satellite Technologies and Analytics, which is supplemented by an additional in-kind contribution from industry partners.

There is also funding committed to the Australian Space Agency:

- to support Australian participation in NASA's plan to return to the Moon and on to Mars;

- for the Space Infrastructure Fund;
- towards an Australian Space Discovery Centre; and
- For international partnerships through the international Space Investment Initiative.

Madam Chair,

On 21 September 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a partnership over five years on future space cooperation between the Agency and NASA, as part of NASA's Moon to Mars activities.

Australia has a long history of involvement in space exploration, shown by hosting deep space communication facilities at the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex.

The Complex played an important role in supporting the Apollo missions and human spaceflight, and currently supports missions such as Japan's Asteroid Explorer Hayabusa2.

We look forward to developing the next stage of Australia's contribution to important space exploration missions, such as our industry's participation in NASA's Moon to Mars activities, and the new knowledge they bring.

Madam Chair,

As technology evolves and becomes smaller and the cost of accessing space decreases, we are seeing different organisations, such as business, participating in space activities.

A key responsibility of the Australian Space Agency is to legislate and regulate, consistent with our international civil space obligations.

This is realised through the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018*, which establishes a regulatory framework for the licensing and safety requirements for space activities conducted in Australia or involving Australian interests, while encouraging innovation. Our legislation

also plays an important role in implementing elements of our international obligations, under the United Nations space treaties.

From 2003 to 2015 there were five applications for an Australian overseas launch licence, all for large communications satellites. From 2016 to present, 18 overseas launch licence applications have been assessed and approved, mostly for small satellites, with the aim of conducting experiments or demonstrating technology. Applicants include university student groups, small businesses and start-ups.

We are mindful of our commitment to the sustainability, safety and stability of the outer space environment. We are working with our industry and science organisations to raise awareness of these issues, including the importance of implementing the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities Guidelines.

A practical example of the voluntary implementation of these guidelines is the sharing of operational space weather data and forecasts with international partners as Australia plays its role in the delivery of a global space weather advisory service for aviation.

Regarding implementation, we will bring our experiences to the working group established under the 'long-term sustainability of outer space activities' agenda item. We look forward to working with you as we progress these goals.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Australia is committed to meeting our international obligations, and contributing to the work of the Committee. We are working to support development of the Space 2030 Agenda and its implementation plan.

Additionally, Australia will continue to participate in, and make a productive contribution to, the work of the Space Weather Expert

Group and Working Group on Space and Global Health. We recognise the importance of this work and receiving the advice of its experts.

Finally, Australia will host the 43rd COSPAR Scientific Assembly from 15 to 22 August in Sydney. The Assembly will combine the latest in space research findings with activities designed to enrich the global space research community, and inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers.

Australia looks forward to hosting the Assembly, and warmly welcomes the global space research community to Sydney later this year.

Thank you for your attention.