

Item 3: General Exchange of Views

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

the COVID pandemic has caused tremendous disruption. Its consequences affect the entire world, and they have also left their mark on our Committee here in Vienna. We deeply regret that we were unable to conduct the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee and the Main Committee last year.

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to you, Madam Chair, as well as to the Office of Outer Space Affairs for your efforts in managing the challenges imposed by the pandemic and for the excellent planning of this session of the Subcommittee. On behalf of the German delegation, I would like to offer you our support in making this session a success.

We would also like to congratulate the Russian Federation on the sixtieth anniversary of the first human spaceflight by cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, space activities have not slowed down. Space technology continues to provide benefits to our modern societies and helps in our efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It also furthers the understanding of our planet as well as the wider Universe. Germany continued to engage in space activities over the past year. Given our strong commitment to multilateralism, and mindful of the guiding principle of our national space strategy to intensify international cooperation, many of these activities were carried out in collaboration with international partners. We have reported on our space activities in a written contribution to the Subcommittee, and we invite you all to take a look.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

we are relieved to be able to come together again in this Committee in order to discuss the pressing issues we are facing. Over the past year, we have lacked this vital and inclusive platform for multilateral exchange on space affairs. We will help wherever we can to restore the continuity of this Committee's sessions and to protect the essential multilateral platform it provides. Let me address a few issues that we are paying particular attention to this year.

The Space2030 agenda is of great importance to Germany. We regret that we were unable to finalize it on the original schedule, but we are optimistic

that the outstanding issues can be resolved at the session of the Legal Subcommittee so that we can adopt it later this year and start working towards its implementation.

The long-term sustainability of outer space activities remains a priority issue for our delegation. We regret that the new working group has not yet been able to agree on a bureau to lead its work. We ask everyone to show as much flexibility as possible to overcome this deadlock. It is time to move forward with developing a balanced work plan that reflects the framework agreed to by COPUOS in 2019. There are many pressing issues for the working group to consider, and we must promptly start the substantive work.

On this note, we would like to address and welcome the conference room paper by the International Astronomical Union, acknowledging the problems for astronomy caused by the emergence of large satellite constellations. We very much appreciate the IAU's expert contribution and believe that this Subcommittee should engage in a structured exchange of views on the various aspects of large satellite constellations with the aim of finding common solutions that minimize their harmful impacts on astronomy.

Germany continues to recognize the importance of research to develop and execute successful near-Earth object mitigation space missions. We are looking forward to the launch of the DART mission of NASA later this year, as well as the scheduled launch of the Hera mission of ESA in 2024, which will jointly conduct the first controlled test of an asteroid deflection method on a real asteroid. Germany is a strong advocate of both missions.

We are strengthening our efforts to address the challenges of space weather. Germany has a strong research landscape focused on this issue, and we are also in the process of building up a national space weather service. International collaboration on space weather is key, and we are looking forward to hear from the Expert Group on Space Weather.

Finally, the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the necessity of strong health sectors, to which innovative approaches from the space sector can contribute. The German Space Agency aims to bring these communities together through its "Space2Health" network. We have detailed this approach in our written contribution to the questionnaire of the Working Group on Space and Global Health, and we look forward to its sessions and its report to the Subcommittee.

Madam Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance Germany attaches to strengthening the role of the Committee and the Office for Outer Space Affairs as unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and in space activities. We are happy to be back here, together with all of you, and we look forward to a productive session.

We thank you for your kind attention.