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**Statement by Richard Buenneke, United States Representative,
on Agenda Item 12, “Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities,”
April 20, 2021**

Madame Chair, the United States continues to give high priority to efforts which ensure the safety, stability, and security of outer space activities. As a result, the United States will continue to play a leading role in the development and adoption of international and industry standards and policies to preserve the space environment.

Since the last session of this Subcommittee, U.S. government agencies and private sector entities have made a number of important advances relating to space sustainability. During this session, the United States will make technical presentations on the progress of two initiatives:

- A NASA presentation regarding On-Orbit Servicing, Assembly and Manufacturing Contributions to the Artemis Program, and
- A U.S. Department of Commerce presentation on the development of an Open Architecture Data Repository for space situational awareness (SSA) data provided by wide range of governmental, private sector and international sources

Other progress by the United States relating to space sustainability since the previous STSC session includes:

- Release of the first iteration of a NASA Spacecraft Conjunction Assessment and Collision Avoidance Best Practices Handbook to share information on best practices for coordinating in-orbit activity,
- Continued improvements to U.S. government and commercial space situational awareness capabilities to detect, track and identify both active space objects and debris,
- Increased timeliness and accuracy of U.S. registration of space objects with the UN Secretary General,
- Successful completion of two commercial satellite mission extensions in geosynchronous orbit,
- Adoption of key cybersecurity principles to serve as the foundation for the U.S. approach to the cyber protection of space systems,

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- New government-commercial partnerships to increase communications, exchange data, and establish best practices for autonomous spacecraft collision avoidance,
- Proposals for new work in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on both large spacecraft constellations and rendezvous and proximity operations and on-orbit servicing, and
- Development of an ISO new work item proposal on space traffic coordination.

Madame Chair, the United States looks forward to providing further details on these and other U.S. efforts to enhance space sustainability at future sessions of the Subcommittee. U.S. governmental and commercial experts also will continue to participate in other international exchanges on space sustainability, such as the “Promoting Space Sustainability” virtual events recently convened by the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs and the United Kingdom Space Agency.

For the United States, these and other intersessional events further highlight the importance of work and cooperation by all nations in the implementation of the Preamble and 21 Guidelines adopted by the Committee in June 2019. These exchanges particularly underscored the key roles played by a burgeoning commercial sector as well as governmental space operators and regulatory authorities. These sessions also provided concrete case studies which can help new spacefaring nations and their operators build their capacity to ensure spaceflight safety.

Madame Chair, given the fast pace of space developments and resulting challenges to space sustainability, the United States believes that the launch of a new working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (LTS 2.0) must be a top priority for this STSC session.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to express our appreciation to Ms. Pontsho Maruping of South Africa and the Secretariat for their efforts over the past five months to facilitate the election of an LTS 2.0 bureau. We commend Japan and Switzerland for their flexibility in helping to advance this process. My delegation looks forward to the substantive contributions of their distinguished

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experts, Dr. Seishiro Kibe and Dr. Thomas Schildknecht, in the new LTS 2.0 working group.

Madame Chair, my delegation is extremely disappointed that an LTS 2.0 still has not been elected. We are very close to agreement on the bureau structure, which would allow two distinguished candidates from India and the United Arab Emirates to lead the first working group meeting that is scheduled for later today under the STSC indicative schedule of work. The United States will continue to work constructively with other delegations to secure election of a bureau as soon as possible, thus allowing the LTS 2.0 working group to convene and complete a terms of reference, method of work and workplan.

In the sincere hope that the Working Group will be able to convene during this STSC session, the United States is pleased to join with Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Nigeria in co-sponsoring Conference Room Paper A/AC.105/C.1/2021/__. We believe the approach laid out in this non-paper can help to ensure that the new group can begin to obtain information and views on practical implementation of the 21 adopted LTS guidelines, the study of new challenges and possible new guidelines, and capacity building efforts. This will allow the group to conduct substantive deliberations at the 59th STSC session with the goal of completing a report to the 62nd session of COPUOS in 2025.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

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