

**Statement of the Pakistan Delegation at the  
58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific & Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of the  
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space  
19-30 Apr 2021**

**Agenda Item No. 3. General Exchange of Views**

**Madam Chair,**

We would like to convey our sincere felicitations to you upon assuming the chairpersonship of the 58<sup>th</sup> session of this subcommittee and assure you of our full support and cooperation for a very productive session.

We also join other delegations in thanking the Secretariat for organizing this Session in the midst of difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Madam Chair,**

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Costa Rica. We have the following remarks to make in our national capacity.

We would like to reaffirm our belief that space is the common heritage of humankind and is not subject to national appropriation by claims of sovereignty. It should be used for peaceful purposes and should remain accessible to all nations on non-discriminatory basis, irrespective of their level of scientific, technical or economic development. In accordance with this belief, Pakistan has ratified all five United Nations space treaties governing the peaceful uses and long term sustainability of outer space.

**Madam Chair,**

As a space emerging nation, the prime focus of Pakistan's national space program is the pursuit of sustainable socio-economic progress. A national space policy is being formulated which will provide the framework for effectively harnessing space technologies and applications towards this objective.

At present, Pakistan has four operational satellites in space including two communication satellites and two remote sensing satellites. The data acquired

through these satellites is being used in diverse fields such as agriculture, disaster management, public health, transport, urban planning, water resource management, and environmental pollution.

**Madam Chair,**

Even as more and more actors turn to space, including private sector entities from the developed world, the space divide – the gap between the advanced space-faring countries and the developing countries with limited or no access to space technologies – not only persists but could widen. The immense potential of space technologies to contribute towards global sustainable development cannot be exploited to the full without following an inclusive approach which ensures that such technologies are within the reach of developing countries. Even as barriers to entry into space exploration are coming down, developing countries continue to face considerable technical and financial hurdles that prevent them from fully benefitting from space technologies. The trend towards seeming “democratization” of space should not make us complacent about the need for greater commitment to ensure accessibility to space for all. Robust international cooperation for capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer are of vital importance to ensure that developing nations can meaningfully enjoy their rights in the exploration, access and use of outer space for sustainable development, in an equitable manner and without any discrimination. This august forum must play its due role in addressing this challenge.

**Madam Chair,**

Space is a finite and fragile resource and must be treated as a global commons. Like any other natural resource, it needs to be preserved and protected in a manner so as to ensure equity and access in its uses for all nations. The continued availability of outer space for the developing nations as well as future generations depends on making the outer space activities sustainable in the long run. In this context, we look forward to the work of the Working Group on Long Term Sustainability to further build on the progress already achieved. We reiterate that this evolving framework must not impose undue and unreasonably high standards and obligations which might be prejudicial to the interests of developing and space emerging countries by limiting their access. Developing countries should not be made to carry the burden of past and present activities of advanced space faring nations.

**Madam Chair,**

Pakistan believes that mitigating the problem of space debris is of fundamental importance to the long term sustainability of space activities. It is a common but differentiated responsibility. Much of the orbital debris which exists today is primarily the consequence of the past and ongoing operations of major space faring nations. It is the major space faring nations, therefore, who should accept the primary responsibility to not only alleviate the situation, but also to assist the developing and space emerging nations, both technically and financially, in meeting space debris mitigation guidelines.

**Madam Chair,**

Pakistan has been a strong and consistent proponent of the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space. We are against the militarization and weaponisation of outer space in all its possible manifestations. It is disappointing to note that countries are already treating space as a war-fighting domain and building relevant military capabilities. Similarly, anti-satellite tests, not least because of their debris generating effect, remain a matter of grave concern. We believe that there is a need to address gaps in the international space laws with a view to ensuring that no one threatens peaceful activities and applications of space technologies for socio-economic development.

**Madam Chair,**

We look forward to a fruitful exchange of views among member states during this important session of the subcommittee.

**Thank You Madam Chair.**