

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**MARIUS-IOAN PISO, CHAIR**  
**COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**  
**SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION, VIENNA, 25 AUGUST – 3 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the sixty-fourth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to express my gratitude for the confidence that you have placed in me to chair the Committee for the 2020-2021 period. The COVID-19 pandemic situation disrupted our work in 2020 which led to the cancellation of the sixty-third session, and it is therefore with great relief I call to order this session before us.

I have the great privilege of working with two distinguished Vice-Chairs: Mr. Francis Chizea of Nigeria in his capacity of First Vice-Chair of the Committee, and Mr. Nicolás Botero Varón of Colombia in his capacity of Second Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Committee. The Vice-Chairs and I will devote our full energy in support of you, the members of this Committee, in continuing the successful work of the Committee.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. André Joao Rypl of Brazil, who skillfully guided the work of the Committee in 2019, with the First Vice-Chair of the Committee Mr. Thomas Djamaluddin of Indonesia and Second vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee Ms. Keren Shahar of Israel. I also extend my appreciation and gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo, and her dedicated Team of the Secretariat for their outstanding substantive support to the Committee and the excellent preparations for this session.

At the very outset, and in view of the decisions by the General Assembly in its resolution 74/82 of 13 December 2019, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the Dominican Republic, Rwanda and Singapore as the newest members of the Committee, which brought our membership to 95 States. I also welcome the Moon Village Association as the newest international non-governmental organizations with observer status with the Committee.

Distinguished Delegates,

This year, we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first human space flight carried out by Yuri Gagarin which marked the beginning of a new era for humanity. In this regard, on 12 April 2021 we celebrated the UN declared International Day of Human Space Flight.

Ever since those remarkable early days of the space era, space activities are increasingly thriving, with the emergence of new technologies and new actors at an unprecedented rate. Space actors have become more diverse and plural than ever before. This should be taken as an encouraging sign that space applications may soon benefit more and more people around the globe. It should also encourage us in our efforts in promoting international cooperation and enhanced use of space technologies for socioeconomic development and for addressing global challenges. At the same time, the increase in space activities demonstrates the need for the governance of outer space activities.

Considering this, we must be mindful of the extraordinary situation we are in. As we have all experienced in 2020 and still now in 2021 the COVID-19 pandemic presents a threat to human health, safety and well-being.

At the same time, I wish to underscore that space actors and industrial players contribute by means of satellite infrastructures and specific technology capabilities to the COVID crisis management and relief. Satellite tracking and specific devices adapted for needs as decontamination and ventilation space technology saved lives during this troubled period. Space applications as telecommunications, observation, positioning and navigation, tele-transmission and remote control are substantially facilitating the present economic and societal challenges given by the pandemic.

I am also encouraged specifically by the activities organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs despite the pandemic, with a range of webinars, virtual conferences and activities, including on space economy and the fostering of the use of space science and technology for global health.

Distinguished Delegates,

The pandemic has also had unprecedented effects on our common endeavour to foster international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee held their sessions earlier this year, but under severe logistical constraints. Nevertheless, both Subcommittees under the skillful leadership of Ms. Nátalia Archinard of Switzerland and Ms. Aoki Setsuko of Japan managed successfully, took decisions, and produced substantive reports. This in itself demonstrates a remarkable commitment by States members of the Committee to take the means available and make progress.

The Committee, in 2019, adopted the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, which is an important instrument for fostering the safety of space operations, while, at that same session, also establishing a new working group under the long-term sustainability of outer space activities agenda item of the STSC. In this context, the STSC this year elected Mr. Umamaheswaran R. of India as the Chair of the new Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and we therefore have the mechanism set up for the next phase in this work.

LSC this year established a new Working Group under the agenda item on the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources and elected Mr. Andrzej Misztal of Poland as Chair and Mr. Steven Freelend of Australia as Vice-Chair. Also here we have the mechanism set up for beginning the work on this matter.

The STSC Working Group of the Whole under the leadership of its Acting Chair, Mr. Umamaheswaran R. of India; the STSC Working Group on Space and Global Health, under the leadership of Mr. Antoine Geissbuhler of Switzerland; the STSC Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, under the leadership of Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom; the LSC Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, under the leadership of Mr. Bernhard Schmidt-Tedd of Germany; and the LSC Working Group on the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space, under the leadership of its Acting Chair, Mr. André Joao Rypl of Brazil, all made considerable decisions and overall

advancement under their respective mandates at the two Subcommittee sessions this year, despite the constraints and complexity of conducting diplomacy under those extraordinary circumstances.

The Committee, through its dedicated Working Group on the “Space2030” Agenda, under the leadership of its Bureau, comprising the Chair, Mr. Mu’ammarr Kamel Haddadin of Jordan and the two Vice-Chairs, Mr. Alessandro Cortese of Italy and Mr. Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu of Romania is advancing its work towards finalization of this important agenda and implementation plan, by meeting during the STSC session in 2020 and LSC session this year and thus paving the way for constructive deliberations at our present session and submission of the “Space2030” agenda to the General Assembly this autumn.

With this overview, I wish to extend my gratitude to our elected officials for the remarkable progress made during a period of disruption and constraints to our governance efforts.

It is important now to continue our efforts to enhance the role of the Committee and its Subcommittees, supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, as a unique multilateral forum for fostering dialogue and cooperation. COPUOS as a whole has clearly demonstrated its ability to function even under sever conditions.

The written procedures we had to resort to in 2020 and which lead to document A/75/20 “Decisions and actions by the Committee on the peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Subcommittee taken by written procedure” also demonstrated that States members of the Committee adapted to the constraints and found a way to proceed in the interest of our common efforts to advance the crucial role of our Committee.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to highlight the ongoing efforts to advance space governance and the work of the Committee. Both the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee at their respective sessions this year considered the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in line the multi-year workplan approved by this Committee. A clear consensus has emerged with regard to some organizational measures. Still, there are points that require further consideration.

At this session we will continue to discuss this matter in order to streamline the work and coordination between the Committee, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. I encourage delegations to actively participate in the discussion and to provide suggestions on this matter. With the hybrid format of our Subcommittee sessions this year, we have gained new experience and certain measures encountered could be studied further.

Space is becoming a permanent presence in common life and on the political agenda of governments and international organizations. The dependency of our civilization on space systems is proven and is becoming critical. From science to direct applications in common life space became a rapid developing area of activity. Each Planet Earth citizen is spending an average of 55 USD yearly for space and space related activities.

The unique times the pandemic influenced all major human activities had effects on space-related local and global matters. However, the development of activities continued, and space

offered effective tools for relief and management. Moreover, the restrictions that the pandemic induced on human activities promoted the evolution of new tools e.g. for telecommunications, virtual reality and modeling and artificial intelligence with support from space and effects for space.

Those unique special conditions were reflected also in the evolution and work of the Committee and its Subcommittees, in organization, management and substance. Despite the successful stability and effects induced globally during the last two decades, it might probably be necessary to perform some adjustments in order to continue to maintain COPUOS as the global body covering the actual increasing societal, economic and political diversity of space activities.

Distinguished Delegates,

We have a very busy 8 days before us with a number of important agenda items to be considered and with major initiatives to be advanced. With your cooperation and valuable contribution, I am confident that this session will be a success despite the logistic constraints we still face.

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