STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 25 AUGUST – 3 SEPTEMBER 2021, DELIVERED BY H.E. ALEJANDRO SOLANO ORTIZ, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COSTA RICA

AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS FIFTY-EIGTH SESSION

Mr. Chairman,

1.   The Group of 77 and China would like to comment on some of the issues put forth during the 58th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and that we consider of utmost relevance for developing countries.

2.   The unfavorable financial situation of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, has limited its capacity-building activities. UNOOSA is affected by a shortage of funds to support cooperation programmes. Nevertheless, the Group would like to note with appreciation activities carried out in 2020, under the Programme on Space Applications by the UNOOSA in collaboration with Member States and other international organizations.

3.   With regard to the technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, the Group would like to reiterate the fact that the geostationary orbit, a limited natural resource clearly in danger of saturation, needs to be used in a way that ensures countries have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

4.   The issue of space debris, its proliferation and removal, continue to be a cause for concern in the space. The Group therefore is of the view that the potential hazards posed by the collision of debris with space objects and the consequences of the contamination of outer space cannot be underestimated. It is also important that new space actors are not burdened due to the historical activities of established space actors. The Group would also like to emphasize the challenges caused by placement of mega constellations in low-Earth orbit, including those related to sustainable use of orbit and frequencies, and believes addressing these challenges should be a priority in the work of COPUOS.

Mr. Chairman,

5.   Space science and technology, and their applications are essential in effectively addressing current and future challenges to social and economic development and sustainability,

such as natural disasters, food security, climate change and natural resource security. The Group notes in this regard that space activities are also crucial to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular as part of efforts to support sustainable economic growth, improve quality of life and manage the global environment. It is therefore important to ensure that the Office is equipped with the necessary resources to assist a greater number of countries in having access to the benefits of space science and technology and its applications in line with the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty.

6.   The Group would like to highlight the importance of science and technology dissemination in bridging the space divide. The Group therefore calls upon the Committee and UNOOSA for greater support to the training programs of the regional centers affiliated to the United Nations, and to conduct wider exchange and cooperation among different regional centers, including through alliance of regional centers, with the aim of enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation to empower the development of technology among nations. The Group also calls upon UNOOSA and Member States to make available more opportunities for academic networking, long-term fellowships and collaboration with national and regional institutions in the field of outer space especially in developing countries.

7.   The Group welcomes the election of Mr. Umamaheswaran from India as the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and looks forward to fruitful deliberations on this timely and pertinent issue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman,