Statement by Kevin Conole, Alternate U.S. Representative to the 64th Session of UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on Agenda Item 6, "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee"
August 26, 2021

Thank you, Mr. Chair. The United States would like to acknowledge Ms. Natália Archinard for her excellent two years of service as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) during extraordinarily difficult circumstances. As always, but this year more than ever, the U.S. delegation extends our gratitude to the Office for Outer Space Affairs for their dedicated support of the Subcommittee and its many activities.

The United States again notes with particular pleasure the successful development of the 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (LTS), as they represent best practices for the safe and responsible use of space. We congratulate Mr. R. Umamaheswaran of India on his election during the STSC, as Chair of a new "LTS 2.0" working group. The United States delegation looks forward to the completion of a Terms of Reference, Methods of Work, and Workplan for the LTS 2.0 Working Group during this session of the Committee. In this regard, the United States is pleased to join with Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand and Nigeria in submitting [conference room paper A/AC.105/2015/CRP.XX][a nonpaper] with concrete proposals for the new working group.

The United States looks forward to commencing substantive work on a new Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability when STSC meets for its 59th session. As we note in our joint [CRP][non-paper], advancing implementation of the 21 adopted LTS guidelines and associated capacity-building serves as the foundation for the new LTS Working Group. A focus on implementation will almost certainly reveal new issues and challenges for the Working Group to address. Moreover, focusing on implementation can ensure that the Working Group's identification and study of emerging space missions and considering possible new LTS guidelines are guided by practical and current challenges rather than hypothetical concepts, and are informed by the most current information on experiences, practices, and lessons learned by industry, the academic community and other private sector actors as well as governmental space entities.

Mr. Chair, as the current mandate for the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space concludes next year, the United States supports maintaining the NPS agenda item to allow for the continued sharing of

information to promote further understanding and development of effective processes to ensure the safe use of nuclear power in space.

Regarding Near-Earth Objects (or NEOs), the United States is an active member of the International Asteroid Warning Network and the Space Mission Planning and Advisory Group, which provide a strong foundation for international cooperation to deal with the potential threat of impacts of natural objects from space.

Mr. Chair, the United States is pleased to see the international community recognize that space weather is an international concern, requiring understanding, preparation, and coordination to predict potentially severe events and to mitigate their impacts. The United States is undertaking efforts to support and implement the recently adopted LTS guidelines, particularly guidelines B.6 and B.7, which are focused on space weather. We look forward to the Space Weather Expert Group concluding its work next year and producing a useful final report.

Under the agenda item on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (or GNSS), the United States remains actively engaged in the International Committee on Global Navigation Systems (ICG) work aimed at creating an interoperable, multi-GNSS space service volume, which will enable improved navigation for future space operations beyond GEO to even lunar missions.

Mr. Chair, the United States would once again like to thank the Member States and observers who have discussed impact of new satellite constellations. We are committed to working with all stakeholders to review progress across the full range of relevant academic, scientific and civil society research and commercial innovations, including technical presentations by delegations and permanent observers. In this regard, the results of a conference on "Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society" planned for October 2021 can serve as an input to this exchange and focus discussions on opportunities for international cooperation. Astronomers and Satellite providers within the United States have been actively working together towards a sustainable future - for the important provision of low-latency broadband service and for future discoveries enabled by astronomy. We hope that you all can listen to our technical presentation on this topic on Monday afternoon.

Mr. Chair, the U.S. would like to address our participation in the international Cospas-Sarsat satellite search and rescue program that provides coverage for emergency beacons carried on vessels, aircraft, and individual users around the world. Presently, 43 countries and two organizations are formally

associated with the International Cospas-Sarsat Program, and several more have shown interest in associating with the program in the future. The four founding Parties - Canada, France, Russia, and the United States - along with EUMETSAT, the European Union, and India provide a space segment consisting of polar-orbiting, geostationary, and a new capability utilizing mid-Earth orbiting (MEO) satellites. Supported by ground segment contributions from an additional 30 countries, the Cospas-Sarsat Program now has five polar-orbiting, six geostationary, and 42 operational MEO satellites, with five more MEO satellites planned to be added to the operational system by 2022. In 2019, there were at least 1,032 SAR events assisted by Cospas-Sarsat alert data and 2,774 persons were rescued worldwide.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.