

New Zealand National Statement - Agenda Item 5

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

1-10 June 2022, Vienna

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Thank you Chair.

Tēnā tatou katoa. Please let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair. New Zealand looks forward to working constructively with you during your tenure. We would like to thank the secretariat for its work in ensuring this meeting could proceed. We look forward to productive and engaging discussions over the coming week.

Chair

New Zealand remains committed to the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of space. It's critical to all our interests that all countries use space for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all.

Respect for the peaceful use of space is inextricably linked to respect for international law and territorial integrity on Earth. New Zealand condemns, unequivocally, the unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russia on Ukraine, which represents a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our thoughts are with the people in Ukraine impacted by this conflict. We are deeply concerned to see reports of mounting casualties and widespread damage. This act of aggression is a grave breach of international rules; the use of force to change borders is strictly prohibited under international law.

We have called for Russia to act consistently with its international obligations, cease military operations in Ukraine, withdraw its troops and return to

diplomatic negotiations as a pathway to resolve this conflict. A unified response sends a shared message to Russia: no country may seize the territory of a sovereign state and no country has a veto over another's security partners or political path.

Chair

As New Zealand's space industry grows, we remain committed to taking a safe, sustainable and responsible approach to space activities.

New Zealand supports open access to space, and continues to host frequent, commercial space launches. This month Rocket Lab will launch the CAPSTONE lunar orbiter from New Zealand. The objective of the CAPSTONE mission is to establish the viability of a particular cis-lunar orbit for the Lunar Gateway Space station, which will play a major role in the Artemis programme. This is the first lunar mission to launch from New Zealand.

New Zealand recognises the value of space-derived information in promoting sustainability on Earth. We have partnered with the NGO Environmental Defence Fund to develop, launch and operate MethaneSat. MethaneSAT is a state-of-the-art satellite designed to detect global methane emissions with unprecedented accuracy. The data collected by MethaneSAT will be used to catalyse a reduction in anthropogenic methane emissions.

New Zealand is also contributing to the NASA CYclone Global Navigation Satellite System (CYGNSS) mission through the Rongowai Project. Under the Rongowai project, Air New Zealand will fly a new sensor on domestic air routes, collecting data and testing the sensor for follow-on CYGNSS missions. Through a New Zealand Government-funded science operations centre at the University of Auckland, New Zealand scientists will collaborate with American university counterparts and NASA to use the data collected for climate science.

These initiatives underscore New Zealand's wider commitment to addressing climate change and highlight the importance of space technology for understanding and preserving Earth's environment.

Chair

In order to ensure our own space regulation facilitates innovation and commercial activity in a manner consistent with our commitment to the peaceful, safe and sustainable uses of space, our Outer Space and High-altitudes Activities Act has recently undergone an independent review. The review has reported its findings to the New Zealand Parliament, and we are now in the process of considering the recommendations of the review. Although our legislation is only four years old, this review recognised the fast-moving nature of the space industry and importance of continuous review to ensure our regulatory regime remains fit for purpose.

Chair

Finally, and separately to our work here, another further aspect critical to the safe and sustainable use of outer space is the articulation of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours in outer space. New Zealand was pleased to have co-sponsored the resolution in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly on responsible behaviours in outer space. While existing international law provides the core regulatory framework for all activities in outer space, further specific rules, norms and standards are needed to effectively operationalise these obligations. We were pleased to take an active role in the constructive and productive first session in Geneva last month. We look forward to continuing that work, which is complementary to and supportive of our work here in Vienna, over the next two years.

Thank you Chair.