

***COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE***

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CANADA

**Item 6 – ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes
Statement by Ashlyn Milligan, Global Affairs Canada**

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has, since its inception, played a crucial role in strengthening outer space governance and achieving our common goal of a safe, secure, and sustainable space environment. This Committee and its members understand that it is only through cooperation, transparency and trust in one another that we may safeguard humanity's future in space and on Earth.

As the commercialization of space promotes incredible technological advancement and scientific breakthroughs, the opportunities that space provides will continue to expand. As a result, humanity will become even more reliant on space technologies in their day-to-day lives than they are today. While this provides incentives for new collaboration between states and civil stakeholders, it also highlights the need for all actors to ensure space activities remain peaceful, the environment stays secure, and emerging issues can be mitigated accordingly.

Mr. Chair,

Our delegation believes the best way to promote such cooperation is through participation in this Committee and a commitment to the enshrined values, principles and international laws that it espouses. COPUOS, its subcommittees and working groups, are essential for facilitating dialogue and the exchange of ideas. This serves to expand our collective knowledge on a range of issues, forge constructive partnerships and build the capacity of developing and new spacefaring nations so they too may capitalize on the many opportunities that space provides.

Universal adherence to the Outer Space Treaty and other core space treaties is the undercurrent of this cooperation. These agreements should guide all space activities and provide the foundation for new standards, principles and norms. From Canada's perspective, ratification of, accession to, and national implementation of the major space treaties and other international instruments must remain a priority for all member states.

In order to strengthen the principles in these treaties - and therefore encourage the peaceful and sustainable use of space – we must expand our scope to adopt agreed on norms of responsible behaviour. That includes pragmatic and voluntary measures states can implement to reduce hazards to outer space actors and assets, and actions taken to avoid miscalculations and misunderstandings that stimulate dangerous events, like conjunctions between space objects.

Norm development and national commitments represent a practical step towards preventing the generation of unnecessary debris, while fostering the climate of confidence necessary to build future legally-binding measures that govern space. These types of practical commitments build trust and confidence between nations while maintaining the conditions required to cultivate new space industries, advanced technologies and novel scientific research that benefit all humankind.

For this reason, Canada is proud to be the first state to join the commitment by the United States not to conduct destructive direct ascent anti-satellite missile tests and we encourage all nations to join, including those without ASAT capabilities. Canada announced our commitment at the first session of the recently established Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats. We view this as a necessary step towards greater safety and sustainability in space, as well as a demonstration of how a normative approach can promote the peaceful use of outer space. It stands to reason that the more states make such a commitment, the more likely it is to become a global norm, affirming that such tests are irresponsible and do not exemplify the values of this Committee.

Mr. Chair, honoured members,

Canada reiterates its support for COPUOS, its subcommittees and working groups, in which we have actively been participating for decades. And, we will continue to support multilateral initiatives aimed at promoting peace, safety and sustainability in outer space. However, if this committee is to address the most urgent issues emerging in space, we must focus our efforts on the timeliest matters and take advantage of the resources, knowledge and expertise of all stakeholders. The way forward in space involves working together, with all states and stakeholders, to define the standards, principles and norms that will ensure the safe and sustainable use and exploration of outer space for future generations.

Thank you.