

Mr. Chair,

please allow me to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation on your election as the chair of the Committee. We would also like to thank acting director Niklas Hedman and the staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs for their ongoing excellent work in support of this Committee.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made by the EU and expresses its full solidarity with Ukraine. The Czech Republic condemns in the strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which grossly violates international law including the UN Charter, and undermines European and global security and stability.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

Space safety is becoming one of the most critical challenges to our future space endeavours. A functional and accessible space environment requires a close balance between a range of related activities and associated disciplines. In particular, in the current era of increasing numbers of orbital elements involving the advent of mega-constellations, but also a growing population of space debris, it is more than ever necessary to find an appropriate and globally acceptable Space Traffic Management (STM) governance. In this regard, we believe that the planned EU approach on space traffic management will support COPUOS community in achieving this ambitious goal.

With respect to Space Debris, the Czech delegation would like to reiterate its long-standing support for the consideration of the issue of space debris in both Legal and Scientific and Technical Subcommittees. The national implementation of space debris mitigation guidelines and recommendations adopted in the United Nations and other fora represents an important task for States. If done appropriately, it should reduce the increasing amount of space debris and the resulting risks to the safety of space activities. The Czech delegation, as one of the initiators of the compendium of space debris mitigation standards, welcomes recent additions to the database, appreciates the Secretariat for updating and maintaining the compendium and encourages States members of the Committee and relevant international intergovernmental organizations, as well as all other States Members of the United Nations, to contribute to the compendium.

We also noted with satisfaction the background document, prepared by the Secretariat, on registration of large constellations and megaconstellations, pointed to certain deficiencies in registration practices of States in this area. In our opinion, it is crucial that all activities in this area are carried out diligently within existing international framework. [Further discussions on this topic should ensure that practice of states in this area does not negatively affect the rights of other users of the outer space, decreases the risk of creation of huge amount of space debris and, last but not least, mitigate the negative impact of megaconstellations on astronomy.]

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic is taking an active part in ESA's Space Safety programme, where in addition to our contributions to the planetary defence mission HERA, active debris removal mission ClearSpace-1 or Space Weather monitoring mission VIGIL, we are working on the preparation of the second period of the programme, which also addresses the ECO Design of space missions, Zero debris policy, life cycle management and future in-orbit servicing missions.

The Czech Republic is also about to integrate its national SST capacities into the EU SST Framework in order to strengthen European capabilities in space debris monitoring and in provision of related satellite protection services.

Mr. Chair, all of above mentioned aspects are, of course, closely linked to the Long term sustainability of Outer Space activities (LTS). We welcome the agreement on the terms of reference, methods of work and work plan of the Working Group on the LTS, we are supporting the process of implementation of existing LTS guidelines at national, ESA and EU level and moreover, we are preparing new national space legislation that will be positively influenced by the LTS principles.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Czech delegation supports the exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources and welcomes the establishment of a Working Group on this agenda item. We note with satisfaction that the Working Group agreed on its detailed workplan and methods of work, which were originally co-sponsored also by our delegation. [We believe that result-oriented Work Plan, as well as the envisaged dedicated international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, will provide excellent

[opportunity for result-oriented discussions on international legal framework for space resources activities.] We look forward to the consideration of this topic and its outcomes.

From procedural, practical and pragmatical point of view, our delegation also highly appreciates consensus on the way forward toward the deliberation of Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society and looks forward to making progress at the future STSC COPUOS sessions.

Mr. Chair,

[We would also like to encourage all delegations interested in peaceful use of lasers in space to visit webpage lasers4space.com, where the delegations can find respective information and news on the international non-governmental scientist-led initiative addressing technological, governance and political aspects and benefits of use of laser in space in the area of space debris mitigation, space traffic management, asteroid prospection and other related aspects.]

In concluding, let me assure you that the Czech Republic remains committed to international cooperation in outer space at all levels and would like to reiterate its strong support for the work and the mission of the UN COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, I thank you for your kind attention.