

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-fifth session - Vienna, 1-10 June 2022

Statement of Italy on item 7. Report of the STSC

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

During the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, Italy made statements on several items of national interest.

Starting with Remote sensing of the Earth, Italy recalled that it remains the strongest tool in support of the activities devoted to the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development and certainly all those related to the management of the environment. Italy has made its major investment in the field of Earth observation from space, financing and developing national programs that are proving to be relevant tools in supporting decision-making processes in different domains. With the launch of the second satellite of the second generation, on 1st February this year, the Italian COSMO-SkyMed radar constellation has reached the number of six elements, four satellites of the first generation, still operational, and two of the second generation. Allow me to recall that part of the data of the COSMO-SkyMed constellation are devoted to the international scientific community, through the so-called International Open Call, launched by the Italian Space Agency in 2015, with no expiry date so far. PRISMA is the other Italian major program for Earth observation with hyperspectral technology. The first satellite has been in orbit since 2019 and it is not only able to distinguish the geometric characteristics of the observed objects, but also the chemical-physical composition of the surface of the Earth. Let me stress the fact that PRISMA data are open and free of charge and available for the international community by just accessing the PRISMA portal and registering. Italy also presented its relevant contributions to the activities relating to disaster risk reduction of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) and, in particular, of its Working Group on Disasters.

Another topic of high interest for Italy concerns Near-Earth Objects, in which my country has a long-standing tradition, particularly in the monitoring of hazardous asteroids that might impact our planet. Let me just mention the

participation of Italy to the NASA Double Asteroid Redirection Test mission, aimed at testing and validating a method to deflect asteroids that could menace to impact the Earth, and the simulation of a coordinated response of the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) to a hypothetical threat caused by an asteroid, simulation currently carried out by the SMPAG under the leadership of the Italian Space Agency and Politecnico of Milan.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

During the 59th session of the STSC, Italy welcomed the inclusion of the item on Dark and Quiet Skies in the agenda and the exchange of views among delegations. We also appreciate the decision of the Subcommittee to include it also in the agenda of the next session, in 2023.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me now to dedicate a relevant part of my statement to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Italy supports with conviction the efforts aimed at ensuring that the use of outer space is carried out in a way that maintains its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations, and that ensures all humanity continue to use it for peaceful purposes, scientific and technological advancements, and socioeconomic benefits.

Italy considers that the preamble and 21 Guidelines on LTS agreed by consensus in 2019 represent countries best practices across a broad spectrum of space issues and the lessons learned from the previous decades on how to minimize the negative impact of human space activities on the space environment.

The Guidelines are clear, practical, and proven, meaning that both the implementation and the efficacy of the Guidelines have been demonstrated by States and international intergovernmental organizations. They do not undermine existing legal obligations or hamper the use of outer space, particularly by emerging space actors.

Italy is committed to align its space activities to the agreed LTS Guidelines. They allowed to improve domestic conversations on the implications of space sustainability for pursuing national space activities and develop a stronger cadre of regulatory frameworks along with coordinated national positions.

The Italian National Security Strategy for Space, approved in July 2019, confirms that this is a national high priority when it considers the promotion of sustainability, safety and security of space activity as a pivotal objective among our national strategic lines of action.

Italy had the opportunity to reiterate this message during the G20 meetings dedicated to space in September 2021, in Italy. In the awareness that space environment and activities must be preserved for the future generations, the meeting agreed on the necessity to tackle the issue of space debris, avoid actions of threat and build confidence through the implementation of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities Guidelines.

Consistently, we recognize the importance of effectively following up on the adoption of the Guidelines, through the newly established working group. We appreciated the flexibility showed by delegations during the last session of the Subcommittee, to find a balance between the three pillars on which the new phase of the Working Group should be based (implementation of the adopted Guidelines, identification of possible new guidelines and capacity building) and welcomed the adoption of the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the Working Group.

Please allow me to express our gratitude for the able guidance of the Chair, Mr. Umamaheswaran, and for the efficient support of the UNOOSA Secretariat 's dedicated staff.

Thank you for your kind attention.