Statement by Valda *Vikmanis* Keller, U.S. Head of Delegation to the 65th Session of UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on Agenda Item 15, "Space Exploration and Innovation"
June 8, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The United States appreciates the work of the Committee and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs to add this agenda item at UNCOPUOS. Co-Chaired by the United States, China, and Jordan, the Action Team on *Global Partnership in Space Exploration and Innovation* was a shining example of the distinguished Member States of this Committee coming together to produce a great report with useful recommendations. The report (A/AC.105/1168) was the first-ever UN report emphasizing the importance of human space exploration beyond low-Earth orbit. Moreover, the United States notes section 4, on "Fostering dialogue with the space industry and the private sector," which highlights the value that private industry adds to space exploration.

Another recommendation from that report that was endorsed by this entire committee was that "all States should conduct their space exploration activities taking into account the long-term sustainable and peaceful use of outer space." To this end, the Artemis Accords establish a common framework to guide space exploration cooperation among nations participating in the Artemis program. The Accords reaffirm our commitment to act in compliance with and implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and other applicable international agreements. We are also committed to implementation of the 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as they represent best practices for the safe and responsible use of space.

As we move into the third decade of the 21st century, human activities in space are more advanced, more exciting, and more international than ever. With this incredible pace of activity, it is critical that each nation behaves responsibly in space. With that in mind, we welcome Colombia, Romania, Israel, Mexico, Bahrain, Poland, and Singapore as the newest of the nineteen countries that have signed the Artemis Accords. We appreciate each signatory – those that have already signed, and those that may yet sign in the future – for joining us in reaffirming our commitments.

Despite the hardships presented by the global pandemic, it has been an amazing year of exploration, innovation and discovery. NASA leads human space exploration in low-Earth orbit with commercial and international partners to enable missions to the Moon and Mars. International Space Station missions are a catalyst for economic development and the advancement of scientific knowledge and new technologies that improve our lives. Between the Perseverance rover and

Ingenuity helicopter on Mars, as well as planned robotic and human missions to the Moon under Artemis, NASA and our partners are opening the door to smarter, safer human missions to Mars. The James Webb Space Telescope, an international program, with NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Canadian Space Agency, recently completed its million-mile voyage. The world will soon see the first images from the most powerful telescope ever built, revealing the stars and galaxies that formed more than 13 billion years ago, just after the beginning of the universe.

The Space Launch System (SLS) will soon launch our Orion spacecraft and cargo on missions to lunar orbit, the surface of the Moon, and beyond. The SLS will be the most powerful rocket in the world, producing up to 8.8 million pounds of thrust during its Artemis I launch. All this progress means we are on our way to land the first woman and the first person of color on the Moon – and this time, we are going to do it with the most diverse coalition of commercial and international partners in human space exploration history.

Mr. Chairman, a key component of our exploration architecture is the Gateway, which is important to sustainable lunar operations and will make future missions more productive than ever before. Together with international and commercial partners, we will use the Gateway and the lunar surface to conduct scientific research, develop and demonstrate technology, and train crews to operate further from Earth for longer periods of time than ever before.

Together, we will learn how to live and work on another world. Our long-term presence at the Moon – both robotic and human – will help develop the experience and capabilities we need to eventually send the first astronauts to Mars.

Mr. Chairman, as NASA Administrator Nelson always says, "the destiny of the human spirit is to explore." In line with that sentiment and the enduring spirit of this Committee, NASA's exploration campaign is responding to the challenge of going deeper into space and invites our colleagues to join us.