

Sweden, Item 4 (General Exchange of Views)

COPUOS, 29 May – 9 June 2023

Mr Chair,

Please allow me to welcome you as Chair of this COPUOS session and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Acting Director Niklas Hedman and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs for the excellent preparation of this session.

Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the European Union, including our condemnation, in the strongest terms, of the Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

We would also like to add the following in a national capacity.

COPUOS and its Subcommittees are unique platforms for international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, including the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and transparency and confidence building measures regulating space activities. "Our Common Agenda", the UN Secretary General's report from September 2021, recognises the important role for COPUOS for the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space. It is now high time to translate this into action, and to actively engage our Committee in the preparations for the Summit of the Future next year.

Space services and technology are essential for many sectors in today's society and for our global economy. They are also drivers for socioeconomic development and crucial for tackling our common global challenges and implementing the Agenda 2030. In this context, I would like to highlight a side event co-organised by Sweden and the European Union on 7 June, in the evening, titled "Space for Climate: From Observation to Action". A panel discussion will focus on our efforts to tackle climate change and advancing the implementation of the SDGs through space technology. We will also bid farewell to Niklas Hedman, during the subsequent reception. You will find more details and registration information on this COPUOS session's webpage.

Mr. Chair,

Sweden is a firm believer in multilateralism. Our national space strategy underlines the importance of international cooperation. Sweden remains committed to promoting the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.

Sweden has been an actor in space for more than 50 years. We have an advanced space industry, cutting-edge research and the space port, Esrange, with more than 600 launches of sounding rockets, in northern Sweden. The government is continuing to invest in the space sector. Since 2020, Esrange has a testbed where rocket engines and reusable space technologies are developed and tested. Late last year, the Swedish research satellite MATS was launched for studies of atmospheric waves, and it has

already delivered a lot of new data that will help us understand the climate change better. Earlier this year, a new launch pad was inaugurated at the Esrange, which will provide Sweden and mainland Europe with capacity to launch small satellites into orbit.

Mr Chair,

Sweden fully supports the continued work of the Working Group on the long-term sustainability of outer space, LTS, and we want to emphasize the important task that rests on member states to continue the implementation of the adopted guidelines.

The fair and sustainable use of space is an overarching priority for the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union during this spring. On 23 May, the Council of ministers responsible for space adopted conclusions, recognising space as a global commons, free for exploration and use by all states without any discrimination, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and emphasising the right to a free, fair and peaceful use of space for the benefit of all peoples.

Chair,

Sweden welcomes the ongoing discussions in the new Working Group on Space Resources. We support the proposals discussed in the working group aiming at holding the workshop foreseen in 2024 in two segments.

As regards the topic of Dark and Quiet Skies, and the problem of light pollution for science and society, Sweden welcomes the initiatives in this

Committee so far. We see the need for continued deliberations on this topic.

Sweden also appreciates efforts by the UNOOSA and partners to highlight the role of women in space and the need to improve gender balance in the space sector. We look forward to engaging on this topic in this COPUOS session as well as in the expert meeting on women in space in November, arranged by Canada and UNOOSA.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, Sweden will continue to actively engage in multilateral cooperation on space issues, in COPUOS and elsewhere. We will continue to promote the sustainable, safe, secure and responsible use of outer space for peaceful purposes in accordance with international law. We remain committed to work to prevent an arms race in outer space and to ensure that outer space does not become an arena for conflict. We will support efforts to enhance transparency and openness of the space environment and the sharing of information from space applications.

I thank you.