



STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA

TO

**THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE
PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

TO BE DELIVERED BY

AMBASSADOR RS MOLEKANE

AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

31 MAY 2023

Mr Chair

My delegation wishes to commend your excellent leadership of the Committee and wish you well for the 66th session. South Africa also wishes to thank all Member States for their support and confidence in Ms Nomfuneko Majaja's chairship of the 62nd Legal Sub-Committee. We also express our appreciation to the Office of UNOOSA, and the Secretariat for the preparations made for this session.

Mr Chair

Our country continues to explore new ways to ensure that space activities are conducted in accordance and compliance with existing rules of international space law. South Africa is of the view that space activities should be beneficial to all mankind and contribute to the prosperity and sustainable development of all nations. These activities should be governed by the rule of law and the progressive development of space law to ensure the peaceful use and exploration of space to the benefit of all humankind.

Mr Chair

In this regard, South Africa supports constructive discussion on the uses of outer space for the benefit of humankind. We should ensure that the regulation of certain technologies or conduct in outer space do not prevent Member States from implementing their respective development strategies. South Africa considers outer space and outer space technologies as useful tools to further develop science and technology for sustainable development. Accordingly, our National Space Policy focuses, amongst others, on contributing to the country's economic growth and social development. The principles of our policy are to:

- a. Utilise outer space for peaceful purposes and the benefit of all humankind;
- b. Be a responsible user of the space environment by ensuring that all public and private sector activities are conducted in accordance with national legislation, relevant international treaties and appropriate international best practices;
- c. Promote research and development in space science and technology; and
- d. Cooperate with other nations in mutually beneficial and peaceful uses and exploration of outer space, with a focus on extending the benefits of space technology to the African continent through the pursuit of co-operative activities with African States.

Any attempt to develop space for reasons inconsistent with the maintenance of international peace and security and our commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are unacceptable. South Africa supports all initiatives to prevent conflict in outer space by negotiating a multilateral treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs) are part of our work on the road to the early conclusion of a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including the prohibition of the placement of any weapons in outer space, as well as the threat or use of force against outer space objects.

Mr Chair

The process to reform our domestic space legislation to incorporate new trends in national space activities is continuously under way and is close to finalisation. The proposed amendments to our national legislation takes into consideration substantive issues that are relevant to the emerging global space dispensation, including pro-activeness in application of the Registration and the Liability Conventions, as well as guidelines being finalised by the Legal Sub-Committee, such as those on the use of nuclear power sources, space debris mitigation, the application of international law to small satellite activities and the review of international mechanisms for cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

Mr Chair

South Africa is pleased to inform the committee that it recently organized the Africa Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Competition. We consider this competition, a critical tool in enhancing the capacity building programme in space regulations to equip countries with the development and implementation of their national legislations and implementation. The growing interest from Universities across the African continent reflects the importance accorded to this prestigious competition and increasing pool of law graduates in the field of Space law and the urgent need to enhance the capacity of African States. This programme is key for the Continent as many African countries are establishing space agencies and therefore they would benefit from the programme.

Mr Chair

South Africa welcomes the support from G7 Science Ministers on Dark and Quiet Skies. Science and technology Ministers of the G7 forum, which recognised the importance of holding continued discussions both in the UNCOPUOS and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) frameworks, as well as with the International Astronomical Union (IAU) on the impact of large constellations of satellites on astronomy for the protection of the dark and quiet skies.

South Africa has recommended the protection of Radio Quiet Zones (RQZ) from Satellite mega-constellations to the agenda for future WRC, through the African Telecommunications Union. South Africa is of the view that there should be greater awareness of both the importance and impact of dark and quiet skies on human health, the environment and our cultural heritage.

Mr Chair

My delegation is pleased to share with the Committee that South Africa will be co-hosting the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) Week and Ministerial Summit in Cape Town from 6 – 10 November 2023. The Theme of this meeting will be “*The Earth Talks*” and will reflect GEO’s unique ability to listen to what our planet is saying

and inspire actions through trusted, open Earth observation solutions. The GEO Week and Ministerial Summit will provide an opportunity to highlight contributions, commitments, and Earth observation solutions on a global stage.

Mr Chair

In closing South Africa expresses our confidence in your leadership to steer the committee towards a productive outcome.

Thank you.