

For All Moonkind, Item 5  
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Thank you, Chair. It is, as ever, a great honor and privilege for me to submit this statement on behalf of For All Moonkind. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the dialog on the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. But first, I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation of your leadership and our gratitude for the incredible work of the Secretariat and the entire staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs. We are thankful for all the kind assistance and guidance we are always provided.

Distinguished delegates, For All Moonkind is the only organization in the world that is focused on achieving the recognition of, and appropriate protections for, human heritage sites found beyond our Earth. Protecting cultural heritage is a hallmark of civil society, and a recognition of human kinship that transcends geopolitical conflict.

Distinguished delegates, paragraph 19 of UN Generally Assembly resolution 77/121, requests this Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and agreed that the Committee should continue to consider the broader perspective of space security and associated matters that would be instrumental in ensuring the safe and responsible conduct of space activities. That broader perspective must include consideration of our cultural heritage.

Distinguished delegates, it has been increasingly evidenced under the UN regime since the establishment of the UN Charter in 1945, that protecting, safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage is pivotal to “maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding,” as required by Article III of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. The UN *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, further recognize heritage as a driver of social cohesion and sustainable development.

Cultural heritage is too often overlooked as a resource for both sustainable development and the maintenance of peace. It can play a steadfast role as we elaborate the rules and principles governing our activities in our exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies.

Distinguished delegates, in reflecting on the World Heritage Convention, the Honorable Russell Train noted that the Convention offers "something more than simply helping to assure protection and quality management for unique natural and cultural sites." It builds and strengthens "a sense of kinship with one another as part of a single, global community." The World Heritage Convention has 193 signatories. That's 193 nations who understand we need to preserve our history so that we may learn from past mistakes, build upon past success, and, most importantly, recognize our human unity. Every day we strengthen our connection to the past – and each other – by preserving and memorializing everything from the evidence of our common ancestors' first bipedal footsteps in Tanzania to the Struve Arc Chain, a system of survey triangulations spanning ten countries which produced the first accurate measurement of the meridian.

In 1958, at the 992<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly, the delegate from El Salvadore, Mr. Vega Gomez, reflected upon the expansion of humanity into space. Though at the time the development of space capabilities seemed unique to only two States, the United States and the Soviet Union, Mr. Gomez recognized that the technological triumphs of reaching space were "not the triumph of a handful of quiet" individuals, but "the result of culture accumulated through centuries, with the contributions brought by the sufferings of [humans]. Human exploration of space is the triumph of human intellect – "the human that is part of us all."

We must remember that the successful exploration and use of resources and domains beyond our Earth required the evolution of the entirety of our human history. No single accomplishment can be claimed by a single nation as our understanding of the universe that surrounds us has been built over centuries of information and data gathering and equal centuries of technological innovations.

Distinguished delegates, cultural heritage reconciles different cultures through an intercultural dialogue. Recognizing and respecting humanity's diversity of cultures and each of their contributions to cultural heritage properties and sites beyond Earth that evidence humanity's triumphs in space exploration create conditions for mutual understanding, dialogue and peace. Indeed, here on Earth, in conflict and post-conflict situations the acknowledgment and conservation of heritage, based on shared values and interests, helps to foster mutual recognition, tolerance and respect among different communities, which is a precondition for a society's peaceful development.

Distinguished delegates, the opportunity to recognize and protect cultural heritage beyond our Earth provides us a unique opportunity to identify, embrace and build upon our collective identity as humans, and use that to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes. We urge this Committee to take advantage of this opportunity.

I thank you for your kind attention.

*For more information about For All Moonkind please visit: <https://www.forallmoonkind.org>*