

**Open Lunar Foundation**  
**Statement under Agenda Item 14 , “Space Exploration and Innovation”**  
**COPUOS Legal Subcommittee, June 7th, 2023**  
**Presented by Dr. Antonino Salmeri**

Thank you Honourable Chair. Space exploration and innovation is a key topic for the future of humanity and we deeply appreciate the opportunity to provide our views to this Honourable Committee.

Although all exploration endeavors are equally important, at Open Lunar we focus specifically on the Moon as our closest and perhaps dearest celestial body. To shed light on the unique features of our only natural satellite, in 2022, together with the Space Generation Advisory Council, we released *Res Luna*, a unique report identifying over 20 natural resource systems on the Moon, including Permanently Shadowed Regions, the Radio-Quiet Zone, Peaks of Eternal Light, Lunar Lava Tubes, and Lunar Regolith. This significant variety in natural systems, with special emphasis on their different levels of accessibility and scarcity, suggests that on the Moon even more than on Earth, one size hardly fits all. As such, the prosperous development of the Moon could be especially enabled by frameworks that allow for diversity and subsidiarity, such as polycentricity. Adopting a polycentric approach, different lunar systems would be managed locally through norms while conforming to shared principles such as transparency, sustainability, peace and cooperation. For example, extracting resources from a permanently shadowed crater in the lunar south pole may come with certain obligations for sharing or coordinating that would not necessarily be needed for a research outpost located in an equatorial region.

Distinguished Delegates, by current estimates, at the end of the present decade the Moon might have been visited by a total of 106 missions from 19 different countries, featuring hundreds of international payloads. One after

the other, all these missions will establish very important precedents like the first persistent infrastructure or the first commercial recovery of a space resource. At Open Lunar we regularly speak with the future operators of these missions. Most of them want to be good actors, but they are often not aware of how their behaviors might raise important questions and set key legal and policy precedents.

Honorable Chair, to shed light on these questions, a few months ago we released the Lunar Policy Handbook, a unique guide to the nascent realm of lunar governance. To answer these questions, we are now supporting the creation of an independent Lunar Policy Platform that can connect lunar actors for the cooperative development of policies and norms of behavior. This Platform will have an inclusive multi-layer structure and operate through asynchronous processes to produce Priority Reports, Standards of Behavior and Coordination Briefings. As relevant and appropriate, we hope that these deliverables could complement and support discussions conducted within this Honourable Committee.

Distinguished Delegates, joint discussions, cooperation and sharing are key to Open Lunar's vision for a peaceful lunar future. Accurate and available information underpins these key elements of international cooperation. Accordingly, in April of this year, Open Lunar released a white paper outlining the potential for a Lunar Registry. This Registry would complement and support the U.N. register of Objects Launched into Outer Space, with a specific focus on Lunar and Cislunar. At present, we have now embarked on a detailed design phase for a possible registry, and by the end of this year we will have a clear understanding of the technical, operational and governance elements necessary to implement it. We welcome participation, questions, comments and advice from all interested Delegates.

To conclude, we appreciate the special consideration given by this Honourable Committee to the key topic of space exploration and innovation. We hope our inputs could be beneficial to Member States interested in this topic, and we stand ready to provide our support as relevant and appropriate. Thank you very much for your kind attention.