

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Sixty-seventh session

Vienna, 19–28 June 2024

Agenda item 14: Future role and method of work of the Committee

Mr. Chair,

Italy aligns to the statement delivered by the European Union but allow me to add few remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

We have a in front of us an era of unprecedented opportunities and challenges for space activities: new technologies are increasing our capabilities to explore and utilize the outer space and to improve the quality of life on Earth; fortunately, those technologies are also increasingly accessible. In order to preserve space as a safe and secure environment and to ensure that space activities are sustainable, we need to strengthen international cooperation.

In this endeavor we strongly believe that this Committee is key and should keep its unique role and its leadership by addressing, with courage and vision, the most pressing issues. With the Working Groups on Long Term Sustainability 2.0 and on Space Resources we are demonstrating that we are capable of such vision.

The proposal for an Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC), which we welcome, is yet another example.

It is now time to start planning for the next steps: in order to initiate concrete actions around critical space issues, Italy supports UNOOSA Director's proposal to hold a UNISPACE IV space summit in Vienna in 2027, a year that will also mark the 60th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty.

Mr. Chair,

Turning to the method of work of the Committee, allow me - at the outset - to stress that this august body is unique first and foremost because it gathers space experts, scientists and lawyers from States Members and observers and because it works according to the principle of consensus. Such expertise and such method of work are not replicable anywhere else in the UN system,

and this is the reason why the Report of the Committee, and the Annual General Assembly Resolution on “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”, which draws from the work of the Committee, are the key UN documents in the peaceful space sector.

It is vital to respect the division of labor between the COPUOS and the UN fora mandated to tackle security issues in outer space, which necessarily follow different dynamics. Nevertheless, we believe that when it comes to the peaceful use of outer space, COPUOS should remain the centre of all substantive discussions and we should all avoid unnecessary duplications, in particular when presenting draft projects of resolution.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to conclude with a very practical proposal for consideration of the Committee: we have witnessed in the past two years, after the resumption of the usual organization of work in the post-pandemic, that the Legal Subcommittee has been able to advance its agenda more than comfortably during its 10 working days. On the other hand, the main Committee keeps struggling with its working pace, having only 8 working days. Having in mind the budget constraints that the UN and UNOOSA face, I would propose to consider convening the next sessions of the Legal Subcommittee for 8 working days and the next sessions of the COPUOS for 10 working days.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.