

UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-Seventh Session
Vienna, 19 – 28 June 2024

Statement of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA)

Agenda item 5: General exchange of views

Chair, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

First, let me congratulate you, Mr. Sherif Mohamed Sedky, for your election in the main chair of the Committee. We extend our appreciation to the past Chair, Mr. Omran Sharaf. Let us sincerely welcome Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini at the first COPUOS Session as the new Director of UNOOSA.

The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) has played a significant role in promoting international cooperation and advancing the field of astronautics since its establishment by space pioneers in 1960. Recognized by the United Nations in 1996, the IAA operates as an independent non-governmental organization with a mission to bring together eminent experts in astronautics for the betterment of humanity.

With approximately 1200 members and corresponding members from 90 countries, including citizens from 80 of the 102 COPUOS Member States, the IAA boasts a diverse and distinguished membership base. Members are individuals who have made significant contributions to astronautics or related scientific fields, and their election to the Academy is a recognition of their achievements and service.

The IAA engages in various scientific activities aimed at fostering international cooperation and advancing knowledge in astronautics. This includes organizing conferences, symposia, and meetings covering a wide range of topics such as space sciences, technology development, policy, and societal impacts. These events provide platforms for discussing key issues in astronautics, sharing research findings, and fostering collaboration among professionals. During 2023 the number of IAA regional meetings and standalone conferences amounted 23.

The Academy is publishing the journal “Acta Astronautica” which reached in 2023 an impact factor of 3.52. More than 6,800 pages and more than one million downloads were counted in 2022.

The Academy also publishes cosmic studies, journals, dictionaries in multiple languages, and book series on relevant subjects. More than 75 cosmic studies are available on the IAA web site “iaaspace.org”.

In 2023, the IAA contributed significantly to the International Astronautical Congress, preparing a substantial portion of the program (about one third) of the entire Congress. For the coming 74th edition IAC to be organized in Milan this autumn, IAA prepared a number of 12 Symposia / 60 sessions including more than 900 papers.

The substantive activities of the Academy are organized under the aegis of six Scientific Commissions: on science, engineering, life sciences, operations and, last but not less important, Commissions on legal aspects of space activities and connections between space and society.

I will mention studies reflecting agenda items of the Committee, as Space Traffic Management (since 2006), Space Debris (since 1988), Space Natural Resources (since 2012), Space systems as critical infrastructures (since 2008). The IAA Planetary Defense Conference – organized every two years since 2007 – will be hosted for the 9th edition in 2025 by Stellenbosch, South Africa. The Space exploration and innovation item is widely represented in the IAA studies, symposia and conferences. Since the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Session the last February we appreciated the initiative of Romania to organize an Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultations. It might be important for the IAA members involved in Moon science and exploration to share their specialist opinion and the IAA is ready to support the organization of such an Action Team.

Importantly, the IAA's membership policy is inclusive, allowing individuals from any country to join regardless of their nation's space-faring status. This approach enables the participation of experts from non-spacefaring countries, offering them opportunities to engage in space activities and potentially initiate space programs in their own regions.

Overall, the IAA continues to play a vital role in advancing astronautics, fostering international cooperation, and promoting the peaceful exploration and utilization of space for the benefit of humanity. You can be ensured, Chairman, that the International Academy of Astronautics will remain proactive in contributing to the goals and programs that make the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space a very unique organization for the benefit of all nations.

I thank you for your attention.