



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF
OUTER SPACE

TO BE DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RAPULANE MOLEKANE

AGENDA ITEM 5: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Date: 19 June 2024

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the South African Government, I am honoured to address this 67th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Let me congratulate Mr Sherif Mohamed Sedky on your election as Chair of this august forum and assure you of our full support; we look forward to substantive deliberations under your able stewardship.

My delegation also wishes to commend the work carried out by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), including its Director Ms Aarti Holla-Maini; Mr Driss El Hadani and the Secretariat for their dedicated work in the preparations for this meeting.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the G77 and China and the Africa Group.

Chairperson,

Space activities should benefit all humanity and contribute to the prosperity and sustainable development of all nations. As a developing country that appreciates the vast potential space has in achieving socio-economic developmental priorities, we actively seek to promote research and development in space science and technology through mutually beneficial cooperation. The National Space Policy of South Africa was developed with the objective of contributing to the country's economic growth and social development as well as extending the benefits of space technology to the African continent.

Chairperson,

South Africa, alongside many other countries on the continent and around the world, faces significant challenges such as climate change, extreme weather patterns, poverty and inequality. South Africa views Space based technology and solutions as a vital accelerator to fast-track the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2063 Agenda of the AU. Space technology can provide innovative solutions and critical data to address these pressing issues, from improving agricultural productivity and managing natural resources to enhancing disaster response and monitoring environmental changes. We reiterate the importance of providing requisite capacity building and technical assistance to developing countries to enhance their ability to leverage space technologies for sustainable development.

Accordingly, South Africa supports the inclusion of a dedicated space track in the Summit of the Future and the Pact of the Future to foster cooperation and coordination to benefit all countries.

Chairperson,

The use and exploration of outer space activities should be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes, in a responsible manner and governed by the rule of international

law. South Africa also supports all initiatives to prevent conflict in outer space, including the prohibition of any weapons in outer space especially Nuclear weapons.

Chairperson,

The process of reforming our domestic space sector and legislation to incorporate key issues relevant to the evolving global space landscape is ongoing. South Africa is thus pleased to inform the committee of recent activities undertaken at **domestic level**:

- South Africa hosted an Earth Observations (EO) Stakeholder Engagement Workshop) to support innovation and harness the full potential of Earth Observation for national development.
- South Africa is also hosting a series of training workshops to empower authorities and decision-makers to incorporate Earth Observation (EO) into their business operations, focusing on spatial planning, environmental management, natural resource utilization, and disaster management and reporting.
- South Africa is also committed to empowering the youth to take up leadership roles in the space sector by equipping them with relevant skills, education and expertise. It is in this regard that South Africa hosted a training workshop in June 2024, for early career professionals and youth from across the continent.
- South Africa also hosted the Africa Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Competition from 22-24 May 2024. This year, Africa will be represented in the finals by the Midlands State University from Zimbabwe. The growing number of teams from across Africa reflects the increasing interest in this dynamic competition resulting in a pool of African law graduates specializing in space law.

As South Africa celebrates its 30th anniversary of democracy, these activities underscore our ongoing commitment to leverage space technology for socio-economic development, advance scientific knowledge, and contribute to global space exploration efforts. In this regard, it is my great pleasure, to invite member states to an African side-event, hosted under the theme **Empowering Africa; Leveraging Space Technologies for Sustainable Development** on Friday, 21 June 2024.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit developed by Canada under the Space4Women initiative to enhance diversity, inclusivity and equitable participation of women in the space sector. We look forward to the 5th edition which will be hosted in Kenya.

South Africa is also pleased to note that the Scientific and Legal subcommittee reached consensus on an agenda item relating to Dark and Quiet Skies and Large constellations. The impact of light pollution on terrestrial astronomy underscores the need for coordinated efforts to mitigate its effects.

Chairperson,

To conclude, South Africa wishes to re-affirm our wish that outer space remains a unifying object for the good of humanity and is not contaminated by Geopolitical and narrow parochial interests and greed, that it ushers in a new humane and beneficial approach as seen in the stories we have heard from the astronauts who have shared their experiences with us here from their different backgrounds and countries. Once again Chair be assured of our support and the success of this 67th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

I thank you.

Word count: 841