

Statement COPUOS June 2024

Thank you Mr Chair,

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. Please allow me to add the following in a national capacity.

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Mr Chair, first of all, congratulation on your election. My delegation wants to assure you of our full support throughout this session. Let me express the gratitude of my delegation, to the Director of UNOOSA, Aarti Holla-Maini, and the Secretariat, for their hard work in preparation of this session.

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We recognize the important role for COPUOS for the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space, including the development of Space Law. And we will contribute constructively to ensuring the long-term sustainability of space activities.

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We would like to thank the UN and Germany and Namibia for all their hard work in the preparations for the Summit of the Future. We also want to thank Portugal for their work in collect input of the space community to the Pact for the Future.

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Sweden fully supports the continued work of the Working Group on the long-term sustainability of outer space, and we want to emphasize the important task that rests on Member States to continue the implementation of the adopted guidelines.

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The fair and sustainable use of space is an overarching priority, recognizing space as a global commons, free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and emphasizing the right to a free, fair and peaceful use of space for the benefit of all peoples.

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Mr Chair,

In January this year the Swedish astronaut Marcus Wandt successfully participated in the Axiom Mission 3, together with astronauts from Italy, Turkiye and the US. Sweden is committed to explore space-based science and we continue to our support to international collaboration in space and the ISS.

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Sweden welcomes the discussions in the Working Group on Space Resources and the proposed plan ahead. We look forward to seeing proposals and continued discussions on the topic.

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As regards the topic of Dark and Quiet Skies, and the problem of light pollution for science and society, Sweden welcomes the initiatives in this Committee so far. We see the need for continued deliberations on this topic.

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We need international cooperation to meet the challenge of space debris - one of the threats to our space infrastructure. For this, and many other reasons, States should refrain from any irresponsible behavior which increases the risk of cascading collisions between space objects, in turn rendering critical orbits unusable for generations to come.

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On 16 April Sweden signed the Artemis Accords and joined the 8 original signatory States from 2020. The Artemis Accords provide a set of legally non-binding principles for cooperation in the peaceful exploration of space in accordance with the United Nations Outer Space Treaties, in particular the Outer Space Treaty and the UN Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We will actively engage in the collaboration between Artemis signatories to promote and strengthen the application of existing international law.

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A rules-based international order in space is essential. Sweden is strongly committed to strengthening international security in outer space, preventing an arms race, and safeguarding the long-term use of space for peaceful purposes. Sweden will continue to contribute to the work of the UN processes to enhance space sustainability, safety and security.

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We consider it useful to draw inspiration from other legal regimes and instruments when discussing the development of Space Law, such as for example the Law of the Sea regime.

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Sweden expresses its unwavering support of UNOOSA and the initiative Space4Women. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Canadian delegation for co-organizing the event developing the gender mainstreaming toolkit. Each day, women from all over the globe are making invaluable contributions to the space community, yet from a gender perspective the space sector remains imbalanced and professional opportunities are not available to women and men on equal terms. With the support of UNOOSA, Member States are working to change this, and we see the development of the toolkit as most timely and as a valuable contribution to our common efforts.

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Sweden continues to, in the strongest possible terms, condemn the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. While parts of this brutal war remind us of tactics from the First and Second World War, it has also shown the critical role of space assets in modern and future warfare.

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The Security Council draft resolution on preventing nuclear weapons in outer space, presented by Japan and the United States, could have been a milestone, reaffirming States commitments under the Outer Space Treaty article 4, not to place weapons of mass destruction in orbit. Sweden, wishing to promote the peaceful uses of outer space and to prevent an arms race in outer space, co-sponsored the draft resolution. We see the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 as the cornerstone of Space Law and deeply regret that the draft resolution could not be adopted, seeing that it was a call to reaffirm existing commitments under the treaty. Sweden will continue to support trust- and confidence building activities in this and other space related UN fora.

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As we are entering a new space age it is my honor to be here as a representative of a space-faring nation with a vibrant industry, developing capability to launch satellites into space, and a commitment to international cooperation on space activities and space security. We remain committed to contributing to the work to advance norms and rules for responsible behavior in space that reflect technological and political developments.

Thank you.