



## **67<sup>th</sup> Session of Committee of Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

**19 – 28 June 2024**

### **Statement by Australia**

#### **Agenda item 6: Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes**

Thank you, Chair, distinguished delegates.

All countries are increasingly reliant on space services for their connectivity, prosperity, and security. Space science and technology deliver essential enabling services such as; telecommunications, navigation, financial management emergency response, and traffic management.

The data derived from space-based technologies is integral to our endeavours in tackling global challenges like climate change, extreme weather and environmental events, and disaster management.

It is in all our interests that we take effective and appropriate measures to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes.

Chair,

As we come together to tackle global challenges, our cooperation within the United Nations system is more important than ever.

The Outer Space Treaty is the cornerstone of the international legal frameworks governing the use and exploration of outer space. Australia would like to take this opportunity to call on all States who have not yet done so to ratify the Outer Space Treaty, and those who have ratified, to comply fully with their obligations under this treaty.

Chair,

In late April, we had an opportunity as an international community to reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and protecting the peaceful uses of outer space.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution put forward by the United States and Japan carried the simple message that States must comply with their international law obligations applicable to outer space and that States that are party to the Outer Space Treaty must comply with the obligations contained therein, in particular the obligations in Article IV.

Importantly, the resolution also recalled the obligations of States Parties not to develop nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction specifically designed to be placed in orbit around the Earth, or to be installed on celestial bodies, or stationed in outer space in any other manner.

Australia was pleased to be part of a cross-regional group of 65 States that co-sponsored this important resolution and, despite the veto of it by a permanent member of the Security Council, Australia will continue to call on all States

Parties to the Outer Space Treaty to comply with their obligations, including Article IV.

Chair,

Maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes is vital for preserving the viability of space infrastructure, and we acknowledge COPUOS as a primary UN body for discussing peaceful uses of outer space.

However, the work COPUOS champions does not exist in a vacuum, and the discussions on space security in the UN disarmament fora are equally important for a peaceful outer space environment, particularly the work of UNGA First Committee in advancing measures to ensure all States act and behave in a responsible manner.

It is incumbent on all member states to ensure they are acting responsibly in pursuing our collective goal of preventing an arms race in outer space in a meaningful and effective manner.

This means adopting an approach to PAROS that takes into account the nature of the outer space environment as it now exists and the full range of threats we are seeing.

It means acknowledging the definitional and verification challenges inherent in the dual use nature of space objects.

It means adopting an approach with the appropriate flexibility to keep up with the technological advances and other developments in the outer space environment.

It is for these reasons that Australia and a growing number of States advocate for an approach focused on developing norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours.

We look forward to advancing this important issue in the course of next year's Open-Ended Working Group discussions.

Thank you.