

**Statement Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding agenda item 6 (Way and means of Maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes)**

Delivered by: Mr. A. Visser, Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure, The Netherlands.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Under this agenda-item the Netherlands wishes to underline the importance of measures to reduce the effects of space debris in outer space.

In recent years the use of space has seen a significant increase accompanied by a corresponding rise in risks and threats. The number of space-active countries and space objects increases every year.

The rapidly growing number of new space activities, in particular in the low earth orbit entails several significant technical and legal challenges for the international community to enable safe, effective and sustainable space operations.

Among these challenges, is the issue of space debris. Space debris is an environmental problem of global dimensions that must be assessed in an international context. Forecasts indicate a continuing disturbing increase of space debris which calls for acceleration of action on space debris mitigation. While post mission disposal measures are crucial, it is equally vital to actively remove space debris as a long-term mitigation strategy to stabilise the space debris environment at a safe level.

The Netherlands incorporated the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines in its national legal, regulatory and policy framework for national space activities. We take this opportunity to urge all States, to halt the intentional and unnecessary creation of space debris. We consider such behavior irresponsible, and detrimental to sustainability, safety, and security in outer space. To demonstrate this the Netherlands joined the group of states which have committed not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests last year.

The rapidly increasing numbers of space actors, space activities and space objects resulting in further space debris, call for action. We all depend on satellites. They are part of our critical infrastructure: for our economy, climate, science and security. Space debris, whether created intentionally or not, poses a serious threat due to the risk of collisions with space objects. Consequently, the international community shares a collective responsibility to solve this problem. My administration strongly believes that we need to strengthen international agreements on responsible behavior in outer space. The Netherlands remains actively engaged in this matter, collaborating through the various UN processes, and striving to enhance synergy between the various fora involved.

The sustainability and safety of the space environment continues to be a key priority for the Netherlands. Therefore the Netherlands supports the development of an international regime to mitigate and prevent the growing number of space debris. This regime should include measures that mitigate, prevent and remediate space debris to keep space sustainable, safe, and secure.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.