

UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Scientific and technical Subcommittee

Sixty-seventh session

Vienna, 19–28 June 2024

Statement of the Delegation of Romania

Agenda item 7: Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its sixty-first session

Distinguished Chair,

Dear Delegates,

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee took note of the guidelines for the proclamation of international years, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 and the related General Assembly resolutions 53/199 and 61/185 (~~A/AC.105/L.307, para. 151~~), which among others, stipulate a separate resolution is required for the General Assembly to take action on UN-designated international years.

In this regard, I would like to call to your attention Conference room paper 11, submitted by Romania and co-sponsored by Mexico, containing text of draft resolution **United Nations-designated international year of asteroid awareness and planetary defence**. The draft resolution text has also been made available as document A/AC.105/L.339.

On April 13, 2029, the asteroid 99942 Apophis will pass safely between the distance of geostationary orbit and Earth. In astronomical terms, that is an extremely close approach. It is so close that the asteroid will be visible with the naked eye to anyone under a dark sky. This is a once-in-a-lifetime event and is a unique occasion to dedicate the year 2029 to a worldwide campaign on raising awareness about asteroids that come near the Earth, their scientific and resource value, as well as the potential hazard they present. It would highlight the collaborative efforts being undertaken at COPUOS to mitigate the hazard that a NEO impact on Earth poses and provide an excellent opportunity for a worldwide educational campaign about NEOs.

It is therefore proposed that the year 2029 be designated by the United Nations as the **“International Year of Planetary Defence 2029 (IYPD2029)”**. As such, the year is intended as an opportunity to raise global understanding of asteroids and comets that might impact our planet

in the future and how we might protect our planet and ensure human security considering possible impacts by these natural objects. With a particular focus on young people, IYPD2029 will stimulate worldwide interest in asteroids and comets - not only as a precious source of information about the origins of our Solar System but also about planetary defence and its role in keeping our planet safe and societies resilient to potential hazards from space.

IYPD2029 is, first and foremost, an activity for the citizens of Planet Earth. It aims to convey the excitement of personal discovery, the pleasure of sharing fundamental knowledge about asteroids, comets, and their remnant meteorites when they impact Earth, as well as spreading the taste for new challenges to the young generation, and the value and necessity of nations working together to defend our home planet. Moreover, while the case of Apophis in 2029 will be very noteworthy, it is also interesting to understand that in the period between mid-2028 and the end of 2029, there will be two large NEOs that will have close approaches with the Earth, with IYPD serving as a broad reminder for such events.

The IYPD is proposed to build upon partnerships among Member States, space agencies, academia, civil society, and to engage young people and the public at large. It is proposed to build upon existing resources and interagency cooperation among relevant entities and their global networks, such as the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), the European Southern Observatory (ESO), among others.

The CRP. 20 presented under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee contained detailed explanations on the vision, mission, goals, and timeline of the IYPD2029. In accordance with the guidelines for proclamation of international years, a separate draft resolution is to be tabled for the General Assembly to take action and we invite interested delegations for informal consultations on the draft text of resolution as contained in CRP 11, **on June 25th, 9 to 10 am, in room M3**. We also would like to invite Member States and observer organizations of the Committee to support this initiative by co-sponsoring CRP 11. We would also like to stress that the costs of all the activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met through voluntary contributions, including from the private sector.

Hoping the proposal is of scientific interest to all Members of the Committee, we welcome your support and collaboration in this important initiative.

Thank you for your attention and support.