

Agenda Item 7 – Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Statement by Kevin Conole
June 21, 2024

Thank you, Chair, and distinguished delegates. As always, the U.S. delegation extends our sincere gratitude to the Office for Outer Space Affairs for their dedicated support of the Subcommittee and its many activities.

The United States again notes with appreciation the successful development of the 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (LTS), and expresses our thanks to Mr. R. Umamaheswaran of India for his continued leadership as Chair of the “LTS 2.0” working group. We look forward to reaching consensus on a final document that highlights the Working Group’s efforts over the past five years.

Chair, the United States commends the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space for embarking on its new five-year workplan that promotes the broad dissemination of information regarding their States’ national space policies and space exploration plans related to the peaceful use of nuclear power in space. To this end, the United States was pleased to submit a conference room paper on the “Evolution of NASA’s Nuclear Flight Safety program to infuse risk leadership and assurance framework concepts.”

Regarding Near-Earth Objects (or NEOs), the United States is implementing its 2023 National Preparedness Strategy and Action Plan for Near-Earth Object Hazards and Planetary Defense, which establishes six key goals for the decade ahead. One of those goals emphasizes the importance of the work of this committee and the Space Mission Planning Advisory group and International Asteroid Warning Network. One example of this is the U.S. 5th Planetary Defense

Tabletop Exercise, which included international partners, including UNOOSA, informed preparedness and response capabilities, including international coordination and involvement, for an asteroid impact threat.

Chair, on Space Weather, in December 2023, the United States released an updated “Implementation Plan of the National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan,” which can be found on the internet. The plan calls for the United States to work with its international partners, including the UN, to coordinate sustained participation in relevant international space weather initiatives, and include emergency management protocols that support coordinated response and recovery efforts.

Under the agenda item on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (or GNSS), the United States remains actively engaged in the International Committee on Global Navigation Systems (ICG) work aimed at creating an interoperable, multi-GNSS space service volume, which will enable improved navigation for future space operations beyond GEO even to lunar missions.

Chair, the United States recognizes the growing opportunities from technology that satellites in low-Earth orbit enable, including for enhanced communications and broadband internet services, scientific research and development, weather monitoring and emergency preparedness, and disaster response. At the same time, we recognize that close collaboration between satellite operators and the astronomical community is vital to mitigate potential impacts to scientific discoveries in the coming decade. Therefore, the United States appreciates the Subcommittee agreeing to include the agenda item on “dark and quiet skies” for the next five years and hopes to have constructive

discussions on how the broad space community can work together to mitigate the effects that large constellations may have on astronomy. In the United States, we have established a discussion group that includes broad stakeholders including astronomers, engineers, lawyers, representatives from the private satellite sector, and not-for-profit organizations and look forward to contributing to discussions under this agenda item.

In closing, the United States would like to address our participation in the international COSPAS-SARSAT satellite search and rescue program that provides coverage for emergency beacons carried on vessels, aircraft, and individual users around the world. Presently, 45 countries and two organizations are formally associated with the International COSPAS-SARSAT Program. Since its start forty-two years ago, the COSPAS-SARSAT program is credited with supporting more than 50,000 rescues worldwide.

Thank you, Chair.