25 June 2025 English only

**Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

### Sixty-eighth session

Vienna, 25 June - 2 July 2025

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub Committee on its sixty-second session**

**Proposal for the Establishment of an Expert Group on Space Situational Awareness**

**Conference Room Paper submitted by the United Arab Emirates**

1. **Introduction and Background**
2. The increasing number of space actors and objects in orbit, combined with the growing complexity of space operations, has elevated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and Space Traffic Coordination (STC) as critical priorities. Ensuring the safety and sustainability of space activities requires addressing several key areas, including information sharing on space activities, operational coordination, interoperability between systems, safety measures, debris mitigation and remediation, and the protection of operational assets and critical infrastructure in orbit. These efforts are essential not only for safeguarding current space missions but also for ensuring the freedom of exploration and use of space for all States and maintaining the long-term sustainability of orbital environments.
3. Space Situational Awareness (SSA) capabilities play an essential role in ensuring safe and sustainable space operations, and in mitigating the risks associated with the increased number of space objects, thereby supporting better global coordination of space traffic, which is needed to make informed decisions and enhance operational safety for all space actors.
4. While there are ongoing national, regional, and international efforts to address SSA and STC challenges, no dedicated mechanism exists to discuss data formats and coordination of global SSA information sharing.
5. In light of the above, the United Arab Emirates proposes the establishment of an Expert Group on Space Situational Awareness with the objective of facilitating discussions to improve information sharing and development of best practices within the framework of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (STSC) of COPUOS, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
6. This paper outlines the mandate, terms of reference, and methods of work for the proposed Expert Group. It aims to support focused discussions at the upcoming sessions of the Committee and to further advance a collaborative, and effective global approach to Space Situational Awareness
7. The Expert Group on Space Situational Awareness (SSA), will directly support Member States in advancing global SSA coordination and cooperation. Its establishment under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) ensures focused, actionable outcomes that complement existing international frameworks, including the LTS guidelines, without administrative overlap. Regular reporting to the STSC under the LTS WG will ensure transparency, alignment, and continuous progress monitoring.
8. **Mandate and Terms of Reference**
9. The mandate of this Expert Group is to: (a) Promote and foster greater awareness and cooperation on exchange of relevant information on space objects (“space traffic information”) and information sharing among Member States; (b) Collect, compile and study existing and/or propose, as appropriate, new measures, and best practices to achieve consistency of data formats and in understanding and use of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) information-sharing practices to aid operational coordination; (c) International cooperation, and identifying areas for future work, including capacity building.
10. UNOOSA shall invite all Member States interested in participating in the Expert Group to appoint a maximum of four experts. Representatives of Permanent Observers could have access to meetings and may provide submissions to the expert group but shall not participate in formal decision-making
11. The Expert Group may invite recognized technical, policy, and legal experts from intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and other entities to its meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. The number of such external experts, shall be maximum of five per meeting, limited to one representative per entity.
12. Such external experts having received an invitation to participate, may observe, speak or submit written contributions, in the formal and informal meetings of the Expert Group. These submissions should be a maximum of five pages in length.
13. The Expert Group will provide focused inputs, with the ultimate objective of creating a technical basis of understanding that can support actionable recommendations and voluntary standards aimed at enhancing global SSA operational coordination and safety in space activities including, for example, the role of the UN in examining SSA information sharing. A comprehensive final report will be presented for consideration with a view to a possible UNISPACE IV.
14. Discussions will be precisely limited to those necessary for fulfilling the group's mandate, avoiding duplication with ongoing COPUOS efforts.
15. The work of the Expert Group shall complement and support ongoing consultations within COPUOS, its subcommittees and their Working Groups. It will promote informal collaboration and exchange of information among existing SSA frameworks or ongoing initiatives.
16. **Method of Work**
17. The Expert Group shall be established under the LTS Working Group, and works on the basis of consensus of its member States.
18. The Expert Group will directly contribute to and complement the ongoing efforts and objectives of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities by fostering effective implementation of relevant LTS Guidelines.
19. The Expert Group shall meet as needed to advance its work, both on the margins of the sessions of the Committee and the STSC and during the intersessional period. All meetings of the Expert Group shall be organized in a hybrid format to allow for the inclusive participation of its members and maximize the use of time.
20. The Office for Outer Space Affairs shall facilitate the work of the Expert Group by providing support in convening and facilitating meetings.
21. Upon the establishment of the Expert Group, and at the proposal of States members, the Committee shall approve its Chair, and the Office for Outer Space Affairs shall appoint a secretary to support its work. The United Arab Emirates expresses its readiness and willingness to act as Chair of the Expert Group, and provide administrative support.
22. The Expert Group’s scope specifically covers topics addressed in Section IV of the proposal. The Expert Group may adjust topics under discussion, as appropriate.
23. The Expert Group will provide updates through LTS WG on its progress to the Scientific and Technical Sub Committee (STSC) under the LTS item.
24. **Topics for SSA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objectives** | **Topics** |
| Topics Relevant to Objective (A) | * Enhanced global operational coordination on SSA data systems and harmonization of data formats across global SSA systems. * Establishment of forums to enable regular communication and exchange of SSA topics among Member States. |
| Topics Relevant to Objective (B) | * Assessment of current international SSA information sharing practices. * Discuss the existing SSA frameworks and potential development of information-sharing platforms, inter alia national or regional existing SSA platforms or a unified platform, e.g. under the auspices of the UN, to align and enhance coordination on SSA among Member States. * Unified global standards and formats for SSA information exchange. |
| Topics Relevant to Objective (C) | * Operational Coordination among satellite operators including notification to enable collision avoidance maneuvers. * Knowledge sharing activities between Member States. * International cooperation on SSA with a view to support capacity building for Member States with emerging space programs / capabilities. * Policy Recommendations * International information sharing and coordination approach for SSA as a potential concrete outcome in events such as possible UNISPACE IV. |

1. **Work Plan for 2025-2028**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Duration** | **Aims and** | **Frequency of Meetings** |
| 2025 | Intersessional | Start discussion | 2 |
| 2026 | Scientific (STSC) | Focus on technical aspects and begin developing draft recommendations. | 3 |
| Intersessional | Present initial recommendations for preliminary feedback. | 2 |
| COPUOS Plenary | Present initial recommendations on for preliminary feedback. | 3 |
| Intersessional | Further refinement of recommendations and prepare an interim report | 2 |
| 2027 | Scientific (STSC) | Finalize recommendations | 3 |
| Intersessional | Refine and consolidate recommendations | 2 |
| COPUOS Plenary | Comprehensive presentation of consolidated recommendations | 3 |
| Intersessional | Address COPUOS feedback on consolidated recommendations. | 2 |
| 2028 | Scientific (STSC) | Finalize outstanding recommendations across all Objectives | 6 |
| Intersessional |
| COPUOS Plenary |