

68th SESSION OF UN COPUOS
Agenda Item No. 11 – Space and Climate Change

To be delivered by

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Chair,

The Philippines is honored to deliver its first intervention under this agenda item.

Outer space must be used not only peacefully, but responsibly and equitably, for the benefit of the Earth's climate, ecosystems, and people.

As a climate vulnerable country, we rely on space science technology and its applications, and space data in responding to the climate emergency, and we have shared our national experiences in this regard in our interventions.

We would like then to take this opportunity to broaden the conversation and consider the sustainability of outer space activities in the context of climate change.

Not all space activities happen in outer space, and not all their consequences are reserved there.

Long-term space sustainability must therefore include consideration of the climate and environmental impacts of space activities on Earth, not just in orbit.

This includes the emissions footprint of launches, atmospheric re-entry, the ground infrastructure, fuel production, and industrial supply chains that support the space sector.

If the space industry were to remain at today's level, current estimates suggest that its contribution to climate and ozone impacts may be limited.

But the space sector is expanding rapidly, in launch frequency, constellation size, and innovation; and the full extent of the climate implications of its growth remains under study.

We are for instance unable to predict long term impacts of scaled-up space flights.

This knowledge gap poses a real governance challenge.

Consistent with the principle of due regard, States must work together to ensure that the rapid development of outer space technologies does not outpace our understanding of their climate consequences.

Sustainability must be embedded across the entire lifecycle of space activities, from design to launch to deorbit, and include the element of transparency in environmental reporting.

We commend the work and contributions of the Working Group on Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

We also encourage this Committee and its Member States to consider the climate footprint of space operations on Earth, in atmosphere, and in orbit, and how they may be integrated into existing and future frameworks under the COPUOS agenda.

It is our view that sustainability is incomplete if it excludes the climate impact. The principle of due regard must extend beyond the safety of space operations to include their effects on the Earth system, including the climate system, which is a shared interest of all of humanity.

Thank you, Chair.

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