

**Statement by the U.S. Ambassador, Ms. Laura S.H. Holgate,**  
**on Agenda Item 4, “General Exchange of Views,” April 4, 2022**

Thank you, Chair. The United States congratulates you on your election as Chair of the Subcommittee and looks forward to working with you to ensure a successful term. We thank the Secretariat, and all of UNOOSA, for their work preparing for this session. The United States takes this opportunity to recognize former Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Simonetta Di Pippo, for her leadership over the past eight years. She has led the Office during a time of significant change and challenge. As we reflect upon our achievements in outer space over the last year, it is clear to the United States that the work of UNOOSA, COPUOS, and this Subcommittee is more important than ever, and we look forward to working with you, Madame Chair, with Interim Director Niklas Hedman, and in due time, a new director of UNOOSA.

Chair, the United States wishes to express its strong support for Ukraine at this time. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, supported by Belarus, which constitutes a violation of international law. The images we saw over the weekend from Bucha and other Ukrainian towns and cities liberated from Russian occupation are horrifying. As Secretary of State Blinken said yesterday, “we can’t become numb to this. We can’t normalize this. This is the reality of what’s going on every single day, as long as Russia’s brutality against Ukraine continues. That’s why it needs to come to an end.” We call on Russia to immediately withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

In light of this, the United States wishes to be clear that an affiliation between the United Nations and the center for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation referred to in UN General Assembly resolution 76/76 is not appropriate. Russia's aggression in Ukraine flies in the face of the peaceful purposes of a regional center, which are intended to build international partnerships.

2021 was an eventful year for the U.S. space program. We completed our busiest year of development yet in low-Earth orbit, made history with multiple commercial human spaceflights and the Perseverance rover on Mars, expanded international cooperation on the Artemis program, successfully launched Landsat 9 and the next-generation space telescope, the James Webb Space Telescope, and much more.

Of particular importance to the United States in the context of the Legal Subcommittee, in December 2021, the National Space Council – chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris – issued the U.S. Space Priorities Framework. This Framework underscores the United States' commitment to preserving space for current and future generations, including through leadership in strengthening global governance of space activities. The Legal Subcommittee is a primary forum for the international community to engage in promoting, upholding, and strengthening this governance framework.

The United States will continue to be guided by the four core – and widely accepted – treaties on outer space: the Outer Space Treaty; the Rescue and Return Agreement; and the Liability and Registration Conventions. Under the legal framework of these treaties, the use of space by nations, international organizations, and private entities has flourished. We are proud of the space sector in the United States, and we see international law – including international space law – as a key tool to enable these actors to flourish in a safe and predictable environment. In that regard, we recognize the continued importance of meeting our obligations to authorize and supervise the activities of U.S. actors in outer space. One way we do that is by maintaining and updating our domestic regulations regarding space activities. The U.S. Space Priorities Framework acknowledges that “[a]s space activities evolve, the norms, rules, and principles that guide outer space activities also must evolve.”

We continue to make enormous strides beyond low Earth orbit. The United States is preparing the next generation to return to the Moon and on to Mars through the Artemis Program. NASA will land the first woman and first person of color on the lunar surface to sustainably use what we learn there to enable humanity’s next giant leap – sending astronauts to Mars. To pave the way for future crewed lunar missions, NASA is about to conduct its Wet Dress Rehearsal for the first launch of the Space Launch System and Orion Crew Capsule. This launch simulation will load propellant and count down the launch to T-10 seconds as part of a test flight of Orion which will launch without crew and travel around the Moon and back to Earth for a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean.

The Artemis Accords, a non-binding set of principles that set out how we will implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty as we live and work together in space and guide Artemis activities, have now been signed by 18 nations. We welcome the seven countries that signed the Accords since our last session concluded, including Bahrain, Brazil, Israel, Mexico, Poland, Romania, and Singapore. The Accords' principles help guide the United States' work in this Subcommittee, including, in particular, the new Working Group on Space Resources.

Chair, the United States underscores the importance of continuing to deliver on the Outer Space Treaty's promise of exploration and use of outer space "for the benefit and in the interest of all countries." Since the dawn of the space age, the United States has used satellites to better understand our home planet, improve lives, and safeguard our future, and we make our Earth observations freely and openly available to those seeking solutions to important global issues, such as changing freshwater availability, food security, and human health. For example, in November 2021, the United States joined more than 100 countries at COP26, reaffirming our commitment to provide the space-based data needed to understand, mitigate, and adapt to our changing planet.

Thank you, Chair.