



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

Finland's Statement in the 61st session of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 28 March – 8 April 2022

Agenda Item 4 – General exchange of views

Thank you Madame Chair,

First, I would like to congratulate you for your election as the chair of the Legal Subcommittee. I wish you success in chairing this 61st session, and assure my delegations full support and cooperation. I would also like to express our appreciation to Setsuko Aoki of Japan for her excellent work as the previous chair of this subcommittee.

I wish also to thank Director Simonetta Di Pippo for her excellent contribution at the helm of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and wish her success in her next steps. I wish to congratulate Niklas Hedman and his team for the continuous work and excellent organization of this hybrid meeting, which allows for a continued dialogue and exchange among the Member States of the Committee.

We welcome Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama, and Slovenia as the new States members of the Committee.

Finland recognizes the importance of the Legal Subcommittee as an indispensable forum for the exchange of views on legal aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation in this regard, and wish to actively contribute in the work of this session.

Madame Chair, and distinguished Delegates,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union (EU) and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation. Finland firmly supports Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, self-determination and territorial integrity. The attack is a grave breach of international law and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia must cease military operations immediately.

Given the current circumstances, we are not in a position to support the proposal by the Russian Federation to establish a new Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in the Eurasian region, affiliated to the United Nations and hosted by the Roscosmos Corporate Academy.

Madame Chair,

The themes of sustainable use of outer space and sustainable growth of the space sector, in particular the NewSpace economy, are the key priorities of the Finnish space policy. Finland is particularly interested in small satellite activities. There are currently eighteen non-governmental satellites registered in the national registry. All of them were launched during the past four years.

The issue concerning safety and sustainability of space activities is a growing concern to all space actors and the society. Finland considers that the development of a global Space Traffic Management (STM) regime,

which contributes towards creation, development and implementation of common international rules that take into consideration changes in the sector, is timely and essential. We are pleased to see the progress in the European discussion on Space Traffic Management through the past and current Presidencies of the Council of the European Union and the Joint proposal by the Commission and the High representative, which we believe contains useful elements for the global discussion at COPUOS.

Finland considers that international cooperation, coordination, and information sharing with regards to all aspects of space activities is key to enable reaching the goals of both sustainable and safe use of outer space. In this respect we wish to mention that Finland organised together with Switzerland in January the second edition of a workshop dedicated to implementation of the 21 guidelines on the Long term Sustainability of outer space activities. This workshop aimed to provide an informal setting for European States to exchange their views and to share their experiences with respect to the implementation of the LTS Guidelines. We find that such exchanges could contribute to developing common understanding on ensuring sustainable future for space activities by all actors, at all levels.

Madame Chair,

Finland believes that the five United Nations treaties on outer space, together with the UN General Assembly sets of principles as well as other related documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly are the cornerstones of international space law. Finland believes that having binding guidance at international level for the conduct of space activities brings predictability and creates conditions for tackling global problems.

At national level, the Finnish Act on Space Activities has been in force since 2018. Last week we have launched a proposal for new additional legislation for public consultations concerning the reception, use and distribution of remote sensing data produced by Finnish satellites as well as the use of ground stations located in Finland for the reception and distribution of data. The legislation aims to take into account the rapid development of technology and the preconditions for business operations. Remote sensing and ground stations offer many new business opportunities, which is why a balance must be found between national security and the promotion of business operations. The preconditions for data-based research must also be ensured. The aim should be to create a predictable and legally clear operating environment in order to promote effective supervision, competitiveness and growth in the sector.

Finally, Madame Chair,

Finland is of the opinion that exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources are best to be coordinated at international, multilateral level for the peaceful and sustainable exploration and use of outer space, that is carried out in accordance with international law and in the benefit and interests of all States. Finland welcomes with great appreciation the establishment of the Working Group under the Agenda Item of Exploration, Exploitation and Utilization of Space Resources in the Legal Subcommittee in ensuring meaningful and effective exchange among the member States of the Committee.

We wish to congratulate the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Working Group, Andrzej Misztal and Steven Freeland, for their efforts to further the topic. We also wish to thank all the delegations for their active participation and constructive discussions during the last session of the Legal Subcommittee. The delegations of Finland and Germany co-operated to produce a working paper, which is supported by a number of delegations and can be found in the working group's dedicated web page. We hope that it provides ideas for our further discussions.

Thank you Madame Chair and distinguished Delegates.