



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
THE 61ST SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE
UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF
OUTER SPACE**

AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

(28 MARCH–8 APRIL 2022)

Chairperson

South Africa is pleased to see you chairing the 61st Session of the Legal Subcommittee and expresses its appreciation to the Africa Group for the nomination and the UNCOPUOS for its continued support.

South Africa extends its deepest appreciation to Mr Niklas Hedman from the Office for Outer Space Affairs and his dedicated team at the Secretariat for the outstanding preparations made in convening this Session.

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Chairperson,

South Africa places great importance on the development of legal mechanisms to regulate the peaceful use, exploration and utilisation of outer space. With regard to the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, we welcome the endorsement of the terms of reference, methods of work and the work plan for the period 2022 -2026. The Group can now commence the critical work required to ensure equality is ensured amongst all nations participating in outer space activities.

Chairperson,

Over the last few years, we have experienced a rapid increase in the number of States and non-State actors participating in outer space activities. This is evident by the number of countries and observers joining the Committee on an annual basis. While the 5 UN Treaties remain the cornerstone of the rules-based framework for maintaining responsible behaviour in outer space, there is also a need for States to adopt, revise or amend regulatory frameworks to ensure the effective application of

relevant international norms, standards and practices for the safe conduct of outer space activities.

Chairperson,

South Africa would like to call on all UNCOPUOS members who have signed the existing Space treaties to work within their legal prescripts and encourages those that have not yet done so, to also consider signing, acceding and ultimately to domesticate them in national policies.

Chairperson,

South Africa is in the process of consultation with various structures of government and other stakeholders in preparation for approval of our Space legislation. We are proud to state that the updated legislation expressly incorporates the legal principles and elements established by the space treaties that South Africa is a Party to.

In addition, the South African Council for Space Affairs (SACSA) has been s actively pursuing its mandate as the regulatory body for Space Affairs in South Africa, The Council recently licenced three locally produced nanosatellites, which were launched under Space X's Transporter -3 Mission on 13 January 2022. The full MDASat-1 constellation will be an operational constellation of nine satellites that will detect, identify, and monitor vessels in real time in support of the maritime industry. The MDASat-1 launch is a significant milestone for South Africa, marking the first launch of a satellite constellation developed entirely on the African continent. The 3-cubesat constellation is communicating well with the ground stations and is currently being commissioned.

Chairperson,

In terms of capacity building and international outreach, South Africa was honoured to organise the 2021 Africa Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Competition, which provided a platform for students, academics, legal professionals

and the space community across Africa to gain exposure on matters of international space law. In light of the increased interest from across the Continent, we are pleased to report that South Africa is currently virtually organising the 2022 African Regional Round, which has shown yet again increased interest from many Teams across the Continent,

Chairperson,

Allow me to conclude by underscoring that the activities of States in outer space should be guided by the existing international space treaties because outer space is a global common for equitable exploitation and protection by all nations, both for today and for the benefit of future generations.

Thank You, Chairperson
