

Agenda Item – 3: General Exchange of Views

Madam Chair and distinguished Delegates,

The Indian delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you Madam Chair on effectively leading the 61st LSC session in 2022 and assures its wholehearted cooperation and support in conducting the current session. We place on record our sincere appreciations to the UNOOSA team led by Mr. Niklas Hedman for efficient organization of COPUOS and its sub-committee sessions and excellent preparations made for the current session. We welcome the new members to the Committee, Guatemala and Uzbekistan.

Madam Chair,

India is a party to all the major international treaties/regulations related to outer space, including Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention. India also implements the outer space related non-legally binding instruments including the UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. To cite a recent example, Earth observation satellite Megha-Tropiques after completing its operational life was deorbited with a series of orbital maneuvers and made to re-enter earth's atmosphere at a predesignated safe place.

India also implements a number of Transparency and Confidence Building Measures, including registration of space objects, prelaunch notifications, and numerous international cooperation activities. India is also committed to implement the adopted guidelines on Long-term Sustainability of outer space activities to the extent possible, and has shared its experiences of implementing these guidelines in its space operations.

India initiated a major space reform in 2020 to enable participation of private sector in space activities. A number of private sector enterprises are expanding their activities within our evolving framework in that regard. A regulatory mechanism for authorization and monitoring of space activities by non-governmental entities has been put in place. This is also being followed up with a national space legislation.

India has also been paying specific attention to capacity building in space law. India also actively contributed to the work of National Space Legislation Initiative in fostering cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region for national space legislation.

Madam Chair,

As need for exploitation and utilization of space resources appears inevitable and technological advancements make it more and more feasible, there is urgent need to put in place, an international legal regime for regulation of space resources. The Legal Sub-Committee of COPUOS is the appropriate forum for this exercise. We are encouraged by the steady progress being made by the working Group on legal aspects of space resource activities. The Indian delegation looks forward to actively engage in the work of the working group.

India believes that technological benefits offered by space based applications hold great potential for addressing the problems faced by humankind. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest across the globe in the utilization of outer space. The private entities are an important component of this revival, which has opened more and more avenues for commercial utilization of space based products and services. However, it has also resulted in rapid increase in proliferation of space objects, bringing forth questions of the safety of space operations. It is crucial to ensure and enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities so that the benefits of space technology are preserved for the future generations. The international legal framework, therefore, needs to be strengthened to enhance the safety and sustainability of space for all space users.

Madam Chair,

The Legal Sub-committee should continue to hold exchange of views on legal mechanisms relating to the space debris mitigation and remediation measures, space traffic management and application of international laws to small satellites, as these factors are crucial for sustainable space operations. This would also allow the member states that are working on national space legislation to incorporate these aspects suitably in their legislation.

The rapid pace of emergence of newer space technologies necessitates that the outer space legal regime, should closely monitor the scientific and technical developments and ponder on the legal challenges they may pose. A greater synergy with Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would be useful in effectively addressing the legal aspects of challenges such as space debris mitigation, space traffic management and ITU allocations.

Madam Chair,

India reiterates its commitment to continue working with other nations, to pursue shared interest in space security towards legally binding instruments as well as transparency and confidence building measures, complementary to them, with a view to ensuring the safety of all legitimate space-based assets.

Thank you, Madam Chair and the distinguished delegates for your kind attention.