



G-77 AND CHINA STATEMENT DURING THE SIXTY-SECOND (62nd) SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, FROM 20 – 31 MARCH 2023, DELIVERED BY H.E. AFTAB AHMAD KHOKHER, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN

AGENDA ITEM 11: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND VIEWS ON LEGAL MECHANISMS RELATING TO SPACE DEBRIS MITIGATION AND REMEDIATION MEASURES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE WORK OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Madam Chairperson,

1. The issue of space debris, its proliferation and challenges posed by its removal, are a growing cause for concern in the space environment. The Group reiterates the need to take active measures to reduce pollution in the Earth's orbit and prevent accidental collisions of debris with space objects. The Group also expresses its concern regarding falling space debris, including during launch and uncontrolled re-entry, which pose a threat to human life, infrastructure and communities on Earth.

2. In this regard, the concept of mitigation and remediation of space debris in the form of removal of debris appear to be viable methods of preventing such collisions in space. The Group understands that there are some contentious issues before the LSC regarding this matter. The Group believes that it is important for all States to register all space objects launched into outer space. The Group also believes that no space object should be removed or eliminated without prior consent or authorization of the Registering State.

3. On the issue of the definition of space debris, the Group acknowledges that COPUOS is the proper forum for this discussion, and supports a consultative process involving all Member States of the Committee. With regard to the decongestion of outer space through remediation, the Group encourages Member States to adopt common but differentiated responsibilities, with the actors largely responsible for creating space debris the most involved in space debris removal activities, and that those actors should make available their scientific and legal expertise to developing countries.

4. With regard to falling space debris, the Group encourages launching states to provide advanced, proper, prompt and adequate notification to other states specially developing countries, located along the drop zones of falling space debris, as applicable, to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to mitigate and respond to such incidents. It is equally important to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in detecting and responding to falling space debris.

5. Pending the adoption of legal mechanisms related to space debris mitigation and remediation, the Group takes note of the relevant non-legally binding and voluntary measures such as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, and invites advanced space-faring countries and other actors, especially those deploying mega-constellations, to pay due regard to their application. The Group further underscores the importance of strengthening the capacity of developing countries for the voluntary implementation of these measures.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.