

## **AGENDA ITEM 12**

### **GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF SPACE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

#### **STATEMENT BY DEREK HANSON, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

**APRIL 19, 2024**

Chair, the number of objects in space is increasing rapidly, and reliable space situational awareness information and services are necessary to support global spaceflight safety and sustainability. International cooperation, including the continuing focus on the implementation of the Committee's space debris mitigation and long-term sustainability guidelines, is critical in this regard, and this Subcommittee should continue to promote best practices, guidelines, and recommended principles that reflect operational realities. I would like to take this opportunity today to briefly describe what we believe to represent an effective and workable vision for the future of international coordination regarding space situational awareness as set forth in the Global Space Situational Awareness Coordination document released by the U.S. Department of Commerce on April 8. I will also provide an update on our national efforts.

Chair, the United States envisions that in the future there will be a global, coordinated system of space situational awareness providers, with a series of national or regional hubs providing space situational awareness information and services to spacecraft operators. These centers will be supported by networks of international partnerships, and their services will be augmented by a robust global commercial sector.

Today and in this future, the United States is committed to continuing its longstanding role as a global space situational awareness provider. The U.S. Department of Defense continues to share space situational awareness (SSA) information and services with U.S. government, non-governmental entities, and non-U.S. entities, to improve the safety and sustainability of space flight. Much of this information is available on a free, publicly available, internet-based space

catalogue at [space-track.org](http://space-track.org). As we transition this responsibility from the U.S. Department of Defense to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the new Traffic Coordination System for Space (or “TraCSS”) will leverage data from operators, governments, commercial, academic, and international sources. TraCSS will provide space situational awareness information and services to spacecraft operators around the world in support of spaceflight safety and sustainability, and will begin operations later this year.

As the United States is developing TraCSS, many other nations and organizations around the world are also developing or improving their own space situational awareness capabilities. The United States is committed to maintaining an open and transparent system that enables global coordination with other space situational awareness providers and ensures reliable and efficient services to global spacecraft operators. This type of close coordination will be necessary to minimize the potential for spacecraft operators to receive conflicting information about potential conjunction events. It also lays the foundation for future space traffic coordination efforts, in which spacecraft operators should have consistent information on the likelihood and nature of potential conjunctions, allowing for a safe and efficient resolution of issues.

We will continue to engage with international partners both bilaterally and multilaterally, including here at COPUOS, to enable cooperation between national and regional space situational awareness systems in operation or development around the world. These efforts will also seek to align with existing international efforts on space sustainability, such as UNCOPUOS Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. One specific early focus for international cooperation in this area should be alignment on standards and best practices for space situational awareness data and information sharing. Adopting standards and best practices for data and information sharing is an important step in facilitating international coordination and ensuring clear and efficient services for spacecraft operators.

Chair, continued international dialogue and coordination of efforts by Member States to provide space traffic coordination services can also support broader efforts by the Committee and the international community to strengthen global governance of space activities. We look forward to furthering these discussions as part of the “Summit of the Future” space-track event later this

year, as well as the “Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities” conference, hosted by UNOOSA and Portugal, in May.

Chair, the United States welcomes continued dialogue and notes that our global vision for space situational awareness is available to all delegations online (<https://www.space.commerce.gov/global-ssa-coordination-vision/>) and we will have a few copies available at our desk next week.

Thank you, Chair.