

Germany, Item 4

UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee

63rd Session 15 – 28 April 2024, Vienna

Statement by Germany

Agenda Item 4 – General exchange of views

Honorable Chair, distinguished Delegates,

Germany congratulates you, Professor Ripol-Carulla, on the election as chair of this Subcommittee and assures you of its support.

We also appreciate the excellent work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs – not only in preparing this session, but in fulfilling multiple challenging tasks and mandates under the UN space treaties and programs, with very tight resources.

Colleagues,

We, like many other delegations, have often referred here to the growing relevance of space activities, the increasing space traffic, and the importance of space accessibility and sustainability to ensure that everyone, everywhere can benefit from outer space, including future generations. Here, we also agree that the five UN space treaties remain the foundational framework for all space activities, and that COPUOS, and this Subcommittee in particular, are the central platforms for developing the legal framework for space activities.

Of course, it is a challenge to develop and implement adequate governance proposals for outer space, so that we can benefit equitably from space activities and their contributions to the SDGs, while addressing potential risks. But beyond all obstacles, we must not forget that outer space is a global common, and it is up to us as an international community to evolve space law to peacefully and sustainably manage outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies. With its new space strategy, Germany has committed itself to work on the development of space law in COPUOS, and to contribute to the agreement of guidelines, standards and norms

enabling the safe and sustainable exploration and use of space by future generations.

So, this particular session again is an opportunity: by consensus, we have important issues on the agenda, and each of them gives us an opportunity to move forward.

In particular, we would like to highlight the following topics:

- Space Debris and Space Traffic Management: To ensure long-term sustainability, space debris mitigation and remediation are key. To further these objectives, the German Space Agency supports the Zero Debris Charter. While non-binding instruments play an important role in the broader legal framework, we ultimately need a global legal commitment to avoid space debris. In recent sessions, also the need for a comprehensive, multilateral space traffic management was emphasized by many countries across the globe. At the same time, it seems we are not yet all on the same page, perhaps lacking inspiration how to achieve our common goal. Who can we ask for advice? Could we be open and give a mandate to a study group of experts to come up with a proposal on how to move forward on space traffic management? Without any commitment, just as a source of inspiration and as an invitation for further discussion among all Member States? We will develop this idea further under agenda item 12.
- Space Resources: It is the province of all humankind to sustainably and peacefully explore and use the Moon and other celestial bodies, including their resources, on the basis of international law and for the benefit and in the interest of all. Looking at the activities conducted or planned, we are convinced that further legal guidance is necessary to ensure they are carried out in accordance with international law and in a safe, sustainable, rational and peaceful manner. This legal framework needs to be developed multilaterally, and the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities is an important mechanism to do so.
- Status and application of the five UN space treaties: It was agreed that the Working Group under this agenda item commences an exchange of views on the implementation of article XI Outer Space Treaty, by which states agree to

share information on their space activities. We look forward to constructive discussions on the purposes, scope and means of implementing article XI.

Honorable Chair, distinguished Delegates,

The Artemis Accords recently signed by the German Space Agency reaffirm the importance of the universal framework established by the Outer Space Treaty and the commitment to establish international rules through a comprehensive multilateral approach. Germany continues to see COPUOS as the central forum for the development of space law and looks forward to continued cooperation with signatories and non-signatories.

The UN Summit of the Future held in New York later this year is expected to provide important impetus for transforming global space governance. We welcome Member States' willingness to use the Pact for the Future to reaffirm the mandate of COPUOS and to strengthen the role of OOSA, making them fit for present and future tasks in the field of global space governance. To exchange ideas on the process, we invite you to join our side event jointly organised with OOSA Tuesday at lunchtime. Please also save the date of the UN/Germany World Space Forum "Sustainable space for sustainability on Earth" from December 3rd to 5th in Bonn, Germany.

Finally, we thank IISL and ECSL for convening their yearly symposium at the occasion of this Legal Subcommittee and we look forward to seeing it scheduled during its traditional slot again at the next session.

Thank you very much for your attention.