

AUSTRIAN GENERAL STATEMENT

58. STSC (19. – 30.04.2021)

ITEM 3

General Exchange of Views

Ambassador Gabriela SELLNER

Madame Chair,

Excellencies – Colleagues,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria fully aligns herself to the EU Statement. We add the following remarks on a national level: First, let me express my pleasure that we are meeting here today, at the 58th Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of COPUOS. We have important issues to discuss. I thank you Madame Chair, the Secretariat and all Member States for their willingness, efforts and flexibility to make this meeting possible - despite the fact of ongoing lockdowns and their implications on the organisation of meetings in the UN calendar

Motivated by our strong interest in the long-term sustainability of space activities, Austria very much welcomes the ongoing establishment of the **Working Group on Long-term Sustainability in Space - LTS 2.0**. We hope that the Working Group will quickly reach an agreement on open administrative issues, especially regarding the future format and composition of the LTS-Bureau, so that substantive discussions on Terms of Reference, Work Plan and Working Methods for its future activities can begin without further delay. We look forward to participating in the Working Group, working on the implementation of the existing guidelines, compiling best practice information and adapting and creating new guidelines in light of the emerging and ever-changing challenges in the space sector.

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Madame Chair,
Colleagues,

Let me turn to the general situation of Outer Space. The situation is precarious in several respects: The growing diversity and rapidly growing economic factor in Outer Space are creating tensions between different users and stakeholders. In 2019, around \$87 billion were invested in space activities by the public sector worldwide. In just a decade, the number of countries with satellites in orbit has increased from 50 in 2008 to 82 in 2018. In 2019, 489 satellites were launched, compared to an average of 110 satellites per year between 2000 and 2013. This massive increase in operational satellites in orbit has a major impact on spaceflight. Space debris is an important topic and affects all space applications, scientific missions, as well as commercial mega-constellations.

This situation increasingly requires a balancing-out of different interests. We therefore believe that it seems necessary to see how this Committee can contribute to the **Global Governance of Space Traffic Management and Coordination and what role the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)** could play here.

In this respect, an Austrian expert will discuss with you **aspects of risk analysis at national level in Space Traffic Management** during his forthcoming technical presentation and will relate this to existing frameworks developed and used by this committee (UN-SPIDER; LTS).

We believe that there is an urgent **need to achieve balance between the multiple uses of space (scientific, commercial, etc.)**. In this sense, we refer to the *Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations* and the request to the Secretary General to report on how important common goods - including outer space - can be preserved for future generations. We look forward to the report.

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The initiative „**Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society**“ is relating to this subject. Light pollution has long been a worldwide problem. It is increasingly causing problems for people and the environment. While artificial light is the biggest factor, the steadily growing number of satellites in orbit makes a considerable contribution as well. This might lead to far-reaching consequences for humankind and the environment, as it also is an important cause for the rapid extinction of species.

A presentation supported by Austria will report on how to mitigate the negative impact of urban lighting, radio broadcasting and satellite constellations' deployment on – for example – astronomy.

Madame Chair

Excellencies, Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me inform you about **two major space-related events** that Austria together with UNOOSA (the *United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs*) is hosting and organising in 2021:

From 6 to 9 December, Austria and UNOOSA will co-host the 3rd edition of the **World Space Forum** at the Vienna International Center (VIC) on the topic "**Space4Climate Action**". This forum - launched in 2019 by the *United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs* together with AUSTRIA - acts as a discussion and networking platform bringing together all major actors in space, including scientific institutions, governmental bodies, NGOs as well as industries and individuals from the private sector.

Another milestone in this year's calendar of space-related events is the **UN/Austria Symposium 2021**, which will take place **from 7 to 9 September in Graz** in an online format.

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The programme and links for registration can be found on the Office's website. Titled "**Space Applications for Food Systems**", the discussion will focus on how space technologies support food systems and, in particular, promote nature-friendly production. The event will contribute to the activities around the *UN Food Systems Summit* convened by the UN Secretary-General and should show the benefit of space technologies in the SDG-framework, in particular to reach SDG 2 ("Sustainable Food for All").

Austria values the activities of the ***Committee on Near Earth Objects (NEOs)***, the work of the ***International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN)*** as well as the activities of the ***Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG)***. In this respect, Austria welcomes the fact that the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs is hosting this year's ***IAA Planetary Defence Conference in Vienna***. This conference will take place in virtual format next week, 26-30 April, in parallel with the 58th session of the *Scientific and Technical Subcommittee*. We hope that some of you will be able to follow - at least parts of - the conference and we are grateful for the fact that UNOOSA has already offered to host the ***IAA Planetary Defence Conference 2023 in Vienna again***, then hopefully in a physical format. Austria will again support the organisation of the conference.

Madame Chair,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

I wish all of us a successful conference.

THANK YOU