

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY CANADA (Mr. Alexandre Bilodeau, Deputy Permanent Representative, Vienna) ON BEHALF OF WEOG  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 4. GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS – MESSAGE TO THE DIRECTOR  
FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

Chair, thank you very much for giving me the floor, allowing me to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group:

I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Her Excellency Simonetta Di Pippo for her excellent service as Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs over the past eight years.

Simonetta, your long-standing and distinguished career in the space domain and your vast experience in diplomacy contributed greatly to the important tasks you fulfilled with so much *grandeur*.

Let me express the deepest appreciation of our group for your valuable work throughout your tenure, at times under challenging and unusual conditions; your unwavering commitment and leadership ensured the Office continuously developed and adapted to new tasks and circumstances, including during the ongoing pandemic.

We greatly commend the emphasis you placed on promoting essential issues such as space for women, youth, and persons with disabilities as well as leveraging the benefits of space for all, accelerating sustainable development on Earth and in space, as well as climate protection through effective capacity-building and partnerships including with the private sector, academia and civil society organizations.

The Office's roles in registration of space objects and disseminating the fundamentals of space law have significantly advanced as well during your term.

Under your able leadership, the role of the Office as Secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees has equally evolved, covering an increasing range of scientific, technical, legal and policy issues and involving a rising number of stakeholders – from 76 members in 2014 to 100 members today, while the number of permanent observers almost doubled to 45 during that period.

Simonetta, we wish you only the very best in your next chapter, in academia, where you will have the very rewarding opportunity to give back to future generations of space enthusiasts – *Grazie Mille e Tanti Auguri!*