

New Zealand National Statement

Agenda Item 3: General Exchange of Views

60th Session of the COPUOS

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

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Check Against Delivery

Thank you Chair,

Tēnā tatou katoa. I would like to join colleagues here in recognising your efforts and the work of the secretariat in all the arrangements for this meeting and in supporting our ongoing discussions on these issues. We look forward to continue working together to progress the important work on this agenda.

Chair,

The peaceful use of space is fundamentally linked with the need to advance peace and fully respect international law on Earth. In this context, I reiterate New Zealand's condemnation of Russia's illegal war of aggression in Ukraine and the grave and ongoing breach of international law that it entails. Our thoughts remain with the people of Ukraine who continue to be severely impacted by the death and hardships of war. Based on Russia's actions in Ukraine I reiterate our serious concern at the proposed establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation which is supposedly meant to build partnerships across the region.

Chair,

Aotearoa New Zealand remains fully committed to the peaceful, safe, and sustainable use of space. We continue to emphasise the importance of open access to space, of facilitating innovation and technology development, and of an open and transparent approach. New Zealand hosts commercial launch operations and, in line with our growing space sector, we place great emphasis on being a responsible space-faring nation.

In line with this commitment, New Zealand recently completed a review of our 2017 national space legislation and regulatory framework to ensure it facilitates innovation and commercial activity in a manner entirely consistent with the peaceful, safe and sustainable uses of space. In addition to this review of our legislation, a broad-ranging public consultation on New Zealand's space policies was conducted. This will inform the development of a New Zealand National Space Policy this year.

Chair,

2022 saw New Zealand continuing to expand our international space collaborations. In August, New Zealand signed a space cooperation framework agreement with the United States to deepen science, innovation and education connections between New Zealand entities and NASA. In October, the New Zealand Space Agency signed a space policy cooperation agreement with Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action to advance space policy and industry development cooperation.

In conjunction with the launch from New Zealand in June last year of CAPSTONE, the first pathfinder mission under the Artemis program, we signed an agreement with NASA on using CAPSTONE telemetry data to develop a research approach to cislunar space situational awareness using ground-based observatories. New Zealand also deepened cooperation with NASA and US research institutions working on the Cyclone GNSS-Reflectometry mission.

In July, the New Zealand Space Agency signed a memorandum of understanding with Axiom Space to conduct research on the International Space Station through Axiom-sponsored missions. Initial projects are focusing on an AI-assisted clinical decision support system to help manage astronaut health and biotechnology research in microgravity.

Chair,

We have been encouraged by the continued momentum of work on the Long-term Sustainability Guidelines which are key to ensuring the sustainable use of outer space. New Zealand continues to encourage all States to implement these guidelines and recognises the value in sharing information about implementation approaches. We look forward to the continued progress of the LTS Working Group over the coming days.

Chair,

Clearly, Chair, space debris represents a major challenge to the long-term sustainability of space activity. As a launching state, we take our responsibility for minimising the generation of debris very seriously. Consideration of debris mitigation is a key aspect of our space regulatory regime, including both through licensing requirements and the ongoing monitoring of objects launched from New Zealand. Recognising the potential of debris remediation to address risks posed by debris already in orbit, New Zealand has recently developed a regulatory policy to facilitate safe and transparent active debris removal and on-orbit servicing activities.

Finally Chair,

We are pleased for the chance to continue discussions about Dark and Quiet Skies. This is a challenging issue requiring consideration of the important benefits of both outer space activities and of astronomical research and other uses of the night sky. Like many countries, Aotearoa New Zealand has important cultural connections with the night sky: the astronomy of Polynesian navigators played a significant role in the discovery and settlement of our country. We encourage discussions on this issue to be mindful of such cultural connections with the sky and we support a multi-stakeholder approach to this issue.

Chair and distinguished Delegates. We look forward to a productive session.

Thank you.