

## **Intervention of Romania on Agenda item 12, Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Romanian delegation considers that the long-term sustainability of outer space activities should be of a permanent concern for all member states. Romania is fully committed to the voluntary implementation of the 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and to the further work of the Working Group on Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

At the same time, the Romanian delegation considers that Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities should be addressed also in connection with the activities carried out on other celestial bodies, in particular on and around the Moon.

The number of government and private lunar missions multiplies every year. The current lack of coordination mechanisms for lunar activities presents a serious challenge to future missions and could lead to conflicts, especially in light of the increased global interest in specific areas like the lunar south pole. The need to preserve the peaceful uses of space, together with the desire to begin a new era of sustainable space exploration, urges the development of a common level playing field for upcoming lunar activities.

Referring to the CRP 20, presented to this session of STS COPUOS, published and distributed to all Member States on behalf of the Moon Village Association, the Romanian delegation expresses its appreciation for the two years of sustained work done by 37 experts from 24 countries to elaborate and publish the report “Recommended Framework and Key Elements for Peaceful and Sustainable Lunar Activities”.

The report is intended to help COPUOS and its subcommittees to approach in a way or another, at a wider scale, already developing activities connected with the Moon. We have in view, in particular, sustainable lunar exploration and settlement in and around the Moon, mitigating the creation of debris in lunar orbit and on the Moon, defining standards to enable interoperability, coordination of safety zones, information sharing, safe operations and lunar environmental protection, responsible governance, benefits for humanity, sustained lunar economy, human interaction. As we notice, the topic of space resources is not

approached, as long as a specific working group on this topic is already functioning at the level of LSC COPUOS.

The Romanian delegation considers that the promotion of voluntary cooperation on matters of mutual interest related to lunar operations, including an official exchange of information between the stakeholders involved in Moon activities is of a critical importance at this time.

In our view, a possible framework for such an activity could be the organization of an International Committee on Lunar Operations. This will operate in a similar way as the ICG on GNSS, with UNOOSA for secretariat. This Group will report periodically to UN COPUOS, helping to de-risking, in short/medium term, lunar operations and contributing, in the long-term, to the sustainable development of the lunar exploration and utilization by all member States.

The Committee should welcome the participation of developing countries, through mutually agreeable assistance, as necessary, to ensure that lunar exploration and exploitation are of the benefit to humanity as a whole.

As long as lunar exploration and exploitation will represent a very challenging space activity for the next decades, involving many member states and other stakeholders, a specific dedicated framework within UN COPUOS for debates and proposed measures focused mainly on operations on and around the Moon should be considered in the future.

We consider our proposal as a starting point for further debates and exchange of information, including during the next sessions of COPUOS and its subcommittees, wishing in the same time to stimulate a feedback in this respect from Member States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished delegates, for your attention.