



61st session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

29 January – 9 February 2024

Statement by Australia

**Agenda item 4: General exchange of views and introduction of reports
submitted on national activities**

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

On behalf of my delegation, I extend Australia's sincere thanks to the outgoing Chair, Mr Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay, for his able leadership of the Subcommittee over the past two years.

We warmly welcome the new Chair, Ms Ulpia Botezatu of Romania.

We also welcome Ms Aarti Holla-Maini as Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Australia offers you our full support and we welcome your initiative to develop a strategic plan for UNOOSA.

We thank the Secretariat for its continued support of the Subcommittee.

Chair

As we come together to address global challenges, the multilateral system is more important than ever.

Australia supports this Subcommittee to discuss and develop rules and norms that seek to support the safety, stability and sustainability of outer space.

We also seek to ensure safety and stability here on Earth. As we approach two years since Russia's immoral and illegal invasion of Ukraine, Australia continues to condemn Russia's aggression, which is a gross violation of international law. In light of this, we consider any affiliation between the United Nations and Russia's proposed establishment of a regional centre for space science and technology education to remain wholly inappropriate.

Chair

Australia takes this opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to all five space treaties and reiterate the importance we place on ensuring that activities in outer space are carried out in accordance with international law.

We are pleased to have recently celebrated 25 years of Australian space law on 21 December 2023. This date marked the 25th anniversary of the assent and commencement of the *Space Activities Act 1998* – the forerunner to our *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018*. Our regulatory framework reflects items of importance to this Subcommittee, including safety of space activities and debris mitigation.

Chair

The Australian Government continues to support Australia's space sector with significant investments across a range of portfolios. This includes important funding for several programmes, such as:

- The Moon to Mars initiative;
- International Space Investment initiative;
- Enhancing the regulation of space activities; and
- The National Student Space Challenge.

Australia is pleased to have provided a summary of recent activities in the Australian space sector, as included in the document entitled *International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space: activities of Member States*, published to the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. I encourage those interested to refer to that document for more information.

Chair

Australia is committed to implementing the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We look forward to participating in the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities when it meets during this session.

Chair

Australia welcomes the Space and Global Health Network, including ongoing development of the Space and Global Health Platform. The Platform is a dedicated, cooperative and globally accessible platform to promote effective collaboration on space and global health issues.

Chair

Australia has both a growing civil space sector and strong research capabilities in astronomy. Additionally, we acknowledge the close cultural connection held by First Nations Australians – the world’s oldest astronomers – with the night sky.

We support multi-stakeholder discussions to develop practical solutions that seek to address the unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy.

Australia looks forward to engaging further with Member States and Permanent Observers on options for the Subcommittee’s continued consideration of the topic of dark and quiet skies.

Chair

Australia thanks Canada for its hosting of the 2023 Space4Women Expert Meeting. The continued development of the Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for the space sector is encouraging, noting collaborative efforts are crucial in fostering inclusivity and diversity within the global space industry.

We take this opportunity to reiterate Australia's commitment to advancing gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and to increasing women's representation in space and STEM fields.

Chair

Australia looks forward to continued engagement with Member States during the 61st session of the Subcommittee.

Thank you.