

## **Statement NL STSC COPUOS – General Exchange of Views**

*Delivered by: Mr. Johan Kroon, The Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure.  
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS 2024.*

Dear Madam Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.

Since this is the first time we take the floor, the Netherlands congratulates you, on your election as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of Copuos. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Juan Francisco Fachetti of Paraguay, for his outstanding work in leading this Subcommittee as Chair of the STSC over the past two years.

On behalf of my government, I would also like to congratulate Mrs Aarti Holla-Maini on her appointment as Director of UNOOSA and extend our best wish for all her future endeavours.

Madam chair, the Netherland fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. Please, allow me to add the following in our national capacity. The Netherlands condemns Russia's illegal full-scale war against Ukraine. The Netherlands calls for Russia to unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from Ukraine within internationally recognized borders.

The Netherlands does not support the current version of the draft resolution on Space Science and Technology for Promoting Peace, submitted by the Russian Federation. We believe that peaceful uses of outer space should start with peaceful and responsible behaviour on Earth and not by serious violations of the UN Charter.

Madam chair, whether on earth or in outer space, the Netherlands is committed to the international rule of law. Hence, the Netherlands is signatory to all five United Nations Treaties related to outer space. And accordingly, the Netherlands has established the Dutch Space Act.

Moreover, the Netherlands signed the Artemis agreements last year. Developments in space, both institutional and commercial, are happening very quickly and require good international agreements. By signing the Artemis Accords, the Netherlands commits to this and offers the Dutch space sector the opportunity to also contribute to future missions within the Artemis program.

The number of space activities in the Netherlands is growing structurally, resulting in an increase in the number of Dutch space operators and satellites under Dutch jurisdiction and control. This year there are twenty-three Dutch satellites registered, and given recent national business developments the number of satellites under Dutch jurisdiction will increase in the coming years.

Considering this, the Netherlands is particularly committed to a safe, secure, and sustainable outer space environment. The Netherlands has therefore finalized its analysis of how the 21 LTS guidelines fit in our existing regulations and how our current Space Act could be adapted accordingly. The results of this analysis also serve as input for our intended process of amending our Space Act at a later stage.

Madame Chair, As outer space becomes increasingly more congested and contested, there is a need for reliable and sustainable space traffic management. Our economies, societies, and security depend more than ever on space infrastructure. The Netherlands is convinced that the international community must strive towards a legally binding instrument for space traffic management, negotiated here, within the framework of the UN. We need governance that enables safe and sustainable space-travel, while providing a global level playing field.

Moreover, in developing strategies and adequate regulatory frameworks, the Netherlands is of the view that the private sector and industry could be more actively involved in our work, like in other UN Bodies.

The ongoing deployment of thousands of satellites in the Low Earth Orbit does not only affect in-orbit operations. These satellite constellations have major influence on the visibility of the night skies for ground-based astronomy. Unfortunately, these adverse effects have not been adequately considered. This calls for an internationally agreed regulation, and in our view, this matter falls within the core remit of the UN COPUOS. The Netherlands Delegation therefore regrets that the Committee was unable last year to agree on an agenda item on dark and quiet skies, despite all efforts by Chile, Spain, the International Astronomical Union, and many others. We hope that at this session, the Subcommittee can agree on a new agenda item to facilitate exchanges on how the effect of large satellite constellations on astronomical observations can be mitigated.

Regarding achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Netherlands supports the use of satellite data for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Netherlands funded the Geodata for Agriculture and Water Facility with € 60 million, which aims to support 4,5 million smallholder food producers with satellite-based information and financial services. By the end of 2023, we have reached more than 4 million small-scale food producers with satellite based advisory or financial services.

However, more public investment is needed to further scale up existing information services that help smallholders increase their productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner and to ensure an efficient use of water. The Netherlands works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in providing data on water productivity in agriculture.

Space assets are an essential part of our vital infrastructure. Our daily business and in particular our vital services and sectors are strongly dependent of satellite services about navigation, communication, living environment, weather, and security. Given this growing importance of space, the Netherlands recently launched an integrated long-term space agenda which sets out ambitions for 2035 on climate, security, and economic growth.

As space is now an indispensable part in our daily lives and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community needs clear rules and a forum where dialogue is possible to develop a global consensus. We believe UN COPUOS should continue to play an important role in this context and the Netherlands will continue to support the activities in this paramount arena, fostering cooperation among states on issues related to outer space.

Thank you for your attention.