

WORLD SPACE WEEK ASSOCIATION

Agenda Item: No. 4

Presented by: Alma Okpalefe, Executive Director

Thank you Distinguished Chair.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is my great honor to speak to you on behalf of the World Space Week Association, and to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Association. This year marks the 25th year anniversary of World Space Week, declared by the UN General Assembly in 1999 as 4 to 10 October annually, and first celebrated the following year, in 2000. Since then, World Space Week has enjoyed growing success year after year, and this is in no small way attributable to the support of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs and of all Member States that celebrate World Space Week.

I would also like to join Member States in thanking the Secretariat and the esteemed Director for the great organization of this session.

It is my great pleasure to report that WSW 2023, dedicated to Space and Entrepreneurship, has been a record year and exceeded all expectations. Over 16,000 events were held in over 80 countries. A new metric of events held per capita was introduced to provide more balanced reporting. This resulted in the following countries emerging as the top five event holders, in ascending order- Oman, Croatia, Pakistan, Ireland and Saudi Arabia. Congratulations to these countries, and indeed all the Member States that participated in making 2023 a record year. I would like to invite you to visit our website, www.worldspaceweek.org, where the WSWA 2023 Annual Report will be published and detailed statistics will be provided.

The World Space Week 2023 theme of Space and Entrepreneurship encouraged a global audience to learn about the contributions of entrepreneurial endeavors in the space sector. It also inspired students by showing that space is accessible to them if they learn not just space technology, but business as well. This prompted thousands of activities, discussions, and workshops across the globe during the week.

World Space Week Association, which is honored to support the United Nations as global coordinator of World Space Week, explored the intersection of space technology and business ventures through social media campaigns on entrepreneurship in the space sector and various collaborative workshops, with partners such as the Space Foundation.

As part of our efforts to increase the impact of World Space Week on space education and public engagement, we supported the Postcard to Space project by distributing specially designed postcards to Pakistani children, in partnership with the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO). WSWA is committed to continuing and expanding this project in 2024.

The success achieved in 2023 was made possible by the commitment of Member States, space agencies, national organizations and participants. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to recognize some of our supporters: Sierra Nevada Corporation, Lockheed Martin, Viasat, Goldman Sachs, Airbus, SES, SCI Aerospace, and GUEM for their support of the World Space Week Association.

The 2024 World Space Week Theme: Space And Climate Change

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the UN's declaration of World Space Week, we celebrate a quarter-century of global dedication to space exploration. This milestone not only commemorates the shared commitment of the thousands of event-holders across the globe to the peaceful exploration of space, but also signifies the incredible strides we have all made in leveraging space sciences for the betterment of humanity.

In 2024, World Space Week celebrations will be centered on the theme "Space and Climate Change". Not only is this theme timely, the linkages are undeniable. Our aim is to showcase the use of space technology in addressing the urgent environmental challenges we face. To all the Member states here present, we strongly encourage your active participation. Together, let's collaborate in demonstrating the importance of space innovations to not only create a more sustainable planet for all, but in directly addressing climate change for our collective future. I ask all of you to encourage the celebration of World Space Week, 4 to 10 October 2024, and reporting planned events in our global calendar.

As we continue in our efforts through WSW to amplify the importance of space to a diverse, global audience, it is important that I restate that World Space Week will always remain open for everyone - regardless of their gender, age, nationality or religious beliefs - and that everyone interested in space has the opportunity to participate in the largest celebration of space in the world. In 2023, we recorded events in 83 countries, however we firmly believe that **all** nations, governments, space agencies and other organizations benefit from engaging and celebrating World Space Week. I thus encourage all gathered here to take on an active role in celebration of WSW. To this

end, you may wish to engage with our Association, so that we can collaborate closer and bring even more attention to your programs.

Finally, I would like to cordially invite you all to our reception dedicated to 25 years of celebrating World Space Week, and sponsored by VAST. We look forward to hosting you at 6:30pm Tuesday 6th February in the Mozart Room.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, and distinguished delegates, for your kind attention. I am looking forward to a great year, and I am hoping that you will all join us in celebrating World Space Week 2024 under the theme- Space and Climate Change.