

AUSTRIA, ITEM 6

Space Debris
61st Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (29 January–9 February 2024)
Ambassador Gabriela SELLNER

Chair,
Excellencies – Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2023 report on **Interconnected Disaster Risks by the United Nations University, Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)** names space debris as one of six areas at risk of reaching a **tipping point**. This means a certain threshold of instability that, when reached, causes a system to collapse or fundamentally change.

Thus, space sustainability is a very serious subject that we need to discuss. We therefore welcome the initiative of Portugal to organize **two symposia on technical and policy aspects of Space Debris, Space Traffic Management and Space Resources** and a **conference on the Management and Sustainability of Space Activities** in Lisbon this May. These events are dedicated to prepare another important input for the upcoming Summit of the Future and its output document – the Pact of the Future. We should work together that the results of these symposia reach the Summit of the Future.

What could be the most important elements in a future governance framework on space sustainability?

I would like to mention a few elements that should be discussed further:

- With the constant and increasing traffic, disposal after use is particularly important. We need to ensure sustainability in space. We currently have guidelines for this, but no incentives for compliance.
- We need more **effective tracking and cataloguing of space objects**.
- We need **more investment in science and technologies for moving passive objects**.

For all these topics, we need a **harmonized regulatory framework**. Austria supports efforts in this direction.

Finally, we would like to mention **cooperation and division of labour between UN-Specialized Agencies and UNOOSA**.

We would like to mention existing cooperation between ICAO and UNOOSA as an example of how to move forward concerning specific topics while respecting the existing mandates:

ICAO and UNOOSA have established a Space Learning Group (SLG) as a cross-sectoral platform to strengthen the dialogue between aerospace stakeholders. In addition, a series of joint symposia have taken place in Montreal 2015, Abu Dhabi 2016 and Vienna 2017.

Concerning work of the **ITU** on space sustainability, we underline that the respective mandates of the agencies and offices are respected. We cannot afford duplication of work and support more cooperation within **UN-Space**. For Austria UN-Space is the relevant coordination platform and we hope that other Member States share our view.