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Statement Item 10: Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Honourable Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Italy has been a steadfast participant in developing the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) guidelines, adopted in 2019. Since then, Italy has actively promoted these guidelines within the Working Group on LTS 2.0. Over the past year, the Italian delegation has closely monitored the group's efforts, significantly contributing to the compilation of the table elaborated in the WG. Italy has consistently emphasized the importance of capacity-building initiatives and fostering cooperation with emerging space nations to ensure the sustainability of space activities for future generations.

By sharing its expertise and resources, Italy seeks to foster a more inclusive and cooperative global space community.

In line with its commitment to sustainable space activities, Italy has incorporated space-related objectives into the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), financed through the European Union Recovery Fund in response to the pandemic. This plan dedicates substantial investments to the space sector, prioritizing advancements in satellite communications, Earth observation, and the in-orbit economy. These initiatives not only drive technological innovation but also reinforce environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, the Italian Parliament is about to adopt the nation's first comprehensive framework law on outer space activities and the space economy. This legislation establishes clear regulations for private sector access to space, addresses existing regulatory gaps, and provides a structured roadmap for national space activities. It contains the required measures for the implementation of the UN space treaties to which Italy is a Party, considering its specific needs, in line with the recommendations contained in resolution 68/74 of 2013 of the General Assembly on national legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. Furthermore, the draft Bill establishes that, in issuing authorizations to private operators, the following principles and criteria shall be complied with: the safety of space activities in all its phases and aspects, from the design of the space object and its components to the management of space activities, providing for a specific analysis of the impacts on safety, as well as an assessment of the light and radioelectric pollution of space objects and the mitigation of space debris; the resilience of satellite infrastructure to cyber, physical and interference risks, resulting in the ability to identify and manage space objects, detect incidents, ensure control of access rights, ensure asset protection; and, last but not least, the environmental sustainability of space activities through the verification of the environmental footprint of all activities carried out during the entire life cycle, from the design, development and production phases to the operational and end-of-life phases.

Yet, a key component of the law is the National Plan for the Space Economy, which includes a dedicated Space Economy Fund designed to foster market innovation through both public and private investments.

From a technical standpoint, Italy is actively working to integrate the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) guidelines and sustainability principles into its national space programs. Additionally, we are investing in space situational awareness capabilities to enhance the monitoring and mitigation of potential collision risks, thereby strengthening the safety and sustainability of the space environment.

As part of our international commitments, Italy contributes to the European Space Agency's (ESA) Space Safety Programme, the European Union Space Surveillance and Tracking (EUSST) framework, and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC), reinforcing global efforts to ensure responsible and secure space operations.

In light of the foregoing, Italy proposes the following recommendations:

- Establish joint projects and information-sharing platforms among spacefaring and emerging space nations to promote best practices in sustainable space operations.
- Develop awareness-raising initiatives to support emerging space nations in building the necessary infrastructure and expertise, fostering the responsible use of space.
- Advocate for the adoption of new international norms and standards to address evolving challenges in the space sector, including those arising from lunar exploration and the growing congestion in low Earth orbit (LEO) due to the increasing number of launches.

While lunar exploration may still be a distant goal for many emerging nations, it is crucial that they engage with its guiding principles and contribute to their development. To this end, Italy remains dedicated to promoting the Artemis Accords, ensuring that all nations, regardless of their level of space development, have a voice in shaping the future of space exploration.

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The Italia delegation reaffirms its commitment to working collaboratively with all member States to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities within the UNCOPUOS framework. Together, we can navigate the challenges ahead and secure a prosperous and sustainable future in space for all humankind.

Thank you for your attention.