Agenda Item 10 – USA Long term sustainability of outer space activities Friday, February 7, 2025

Chair, 2024 set a new record for spaceflight with over 250 launches. Now, more than 80 countries have had a satellite in orbit and have been able to access the many benefits that outer space affords. This increasing activity also encompasses the commercial space sector, including satellite constellation operators, which have extended these benefits to even more communities. These milestone achievements are paired with an important reminder: the more we depend upon the benefits derived from space, the more pressing the responsibility to support the long-term sustainability of the outer space environment.

That is why the 2020 U.S. National Space Policy instructs the U.S. government to preserve the space environment and enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

One of the most important factors in advancing sustainability is knowing the location of space object in orbit and being able to predict and avoid potential collisions. The United States Department of Defense has been providing space object tracking data through space-track.org for well over a decade and continues to alert satellite operators of potential conjunctions in an effort that has only grown more complex and frequent in recent years. As directed by Space Policy Directive 3 in 2018, many of these responsibilities are now planned for transition to a civilian system administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce and their Traffic Coordination System for Space (TraCCS). We look forward to providing additional updates on the progress of these efforts to this subcommittee and the full Committee.

These initiatives build upon a long history of the United States promoting the safe, responsible, and sustainable use of outer space and underscores our commitment to UNCOPUOS' 21 Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Under the leadership of Mr. Umamaheshwaran, the LTS working group has made progress in advancing the three pillars of its workplan, but there is still much work to be done even as we quickly approach the end of our mandate.

It is difficult to overstate the impact that the LTS guidelines have had on the international space community. Member States, including my own, have used these guidelines to inform policies, operating procedures, and regulations. They demonstrate that this Committee can produce substantive, technically rigorous, and meaningful consensus-based outcomes that have a lasting effect. As the second iteration of the LTS working group reaches the end of its mandate, my delegation would like to highlight the numerous conference room papers submitted by Member States detailing their implementation efforts, potential new challenges, capacity building initiatives, and possible recommendations for future work. It is imperative that we find a way to produce a report that accurately highlights these achievements and ideas. If we do not, we risk other international fora stepping in to address an incorrect perception that UNCOPUOS has not made valuable progress on long-term sustainability. My delegation is optimistic that we will find a way forward and produce a substantive report that highlights Member States' many accomplishments, identifies areas of future work, and produces practical, consensus-based recommendations.

Thank you, Chair.