

Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Sixty-second Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

of

COPUOS

Agenda Item 11: Future role and methods of work of the Committee

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Madam Chair

The STSC provides a unique framework for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, allowing for a technical examination of space-related issues free from political considerations. Therefore, efforts to improve its processes are essential. The first general principle in enhancing the processes of this Subcommittee is the commitment of all Member States to ensuring that **norm-setting processes** in the field of space, including for exploration, exploitation, and the sustainable use of outer space, **take place within the framework of COPUOS** and its subcommittees. This is essential to prevent the fragmentation of space activities. Parallel processes or platforms established based on the interests of a group of countries would undermine the coherent and coordinated efforts of COPUOS and its Subcommittees and ultimately hinder the greater sustainability of outer space.

The principle of consensus in the work of COPUOS and its subcommittees is necessary to ensure universality and facilitate the implementation of its decisions. Political and geopolitical divides should not divert this Subcommittee from its primary responsibility of conducting scientific and technical discussions on space activities and their challenges.

As States bear the responsibility for implementing space law rules and regulations, the involvement of other stakeholders in space activities should not diminish the intergovernmental nature of space law rights and obligations or the central role of States in such activities. This principle must always be considered by the Subcommittee in its engagement with other stakeholders.

This Subcommittee should provide an appropriate environment for the technical assessment of the needs of developing countries and the examination of emerging challenges in outer space. It should adopt new approaches, tools, and methodologies to ensure that it remains up-to-date with the rapid developments in space activities. The establishment of working groups on challenging issues and the prioritization of topics with high accuracy and focus would contribute to the flexibility and innovation of the Subcommittee's methods.

While all agenda items of this Subcommittee are important, the rapid evolution of space activities and the increasing presence of private actors in this domain—particularly in relation to mega constellations of satellites—necessitate dedicated attention. Given the restrictive impact of such satellite constellations on the development of space capabilities in developing countries and the limitations they impose on the free access of all nations to space, this Subcommittee should thoroughly examine the technical aspects of this matter.

In the context of capacity-building and enhancing the space capabilities of developing countries, joint regional projects and the establishment of regional centers for space science and technology education should continue to be supported. These centers should enhance their exchanges and cooperation with one another.

we can ensure that the STSC remains a leading platform for advancing space science and technology by:

- improving international cooperation mechanisms,
- focusing on the safety of space activities,
- addressing new scientific and technical challenges in space,
- upholding the sovereignty and role of States, and
- enhancing capacity-building.

Madam Chair,

Iran supports the establishment of the Action Team on Lunar Activities (ATLAC) within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). This initiative aligns with our commitment to ensuring that the benefits of space exploration are accessible to all nations, regardless of their economic and technological status.

Free Access to Outer Space: Iran advocates for the principle of free access to outer space for all countries. This principle is fundamental to fostering international cooperation and ensuring that space exploration remains a tool for peace and development. Developing countries should have equal opportunities to participate in lunar activities and benefit from the scientific and technological advancements that arise from such endeavors. This aligns with Article I of the Outer Space Treaty, which states that "the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind".

Non-Appropriation of Space: Iran emphasizes the importance of the non-appropriation principle, as enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty. The Moon and other celestial bodies should not be subject to national appropriation by any means. This principle ensures that space remains a common heritage of humankind, free from claims of sovereignty or ownership.

Non-Militarization and Weaponization of Space: Space should be preserved as a peaceful domain, free from the presence of weapons and military activities. The international community must work together to prevent an arms race in space and ensure that space remains a safe and secure environment for all nations.

Information Sharing: Iran supports the need for transparent and timely information sharing regarding lunar activities. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is uniquely positioned to serve as the central hub for information exchange on lunar exploration activities. UNOOSA's mandate to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space makes it the ideal platform for coordinating the dissemination of information. Countries engaged in lunar exploration should actively participate in this process by sharing their plans, progress,

and findings with UNOOSA, which will facilitate coordination, prevent conflicts, and promote the safe and sustainable use of lunar resources.

Furthermore, Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty emphasizes the importance of informing the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as the public and the international scientific community, to the greatest extent feasible and practicable, of the nature, conduct, locations, and results of space activities. Adhering to this principle ensures transparency and builds trust among nations.

By encouraging all countries involved in lunar exploration to contribute to UNOOSA's information-sharing efforts, we can create a comprehensive and up-to-date repository of data that benefits the entire international community. This collaborative approach not only enhances mutual understanding and cooperation but also ensures that the benefits of lunar exploration are equitably shared. ATLAC is the best place to discuss ways and means of such information sharing.

International cooperation and Capacity Building: Iran recognizes the importance of capacity building for developing countries in the field of space exploration. International cooperation and assistance are essential to help these countries develop the necessary technical and scientific capabilities to participate in lunar activities. Capacity-building initiatives should be inclusive, non-selective, and tailored to the specific needs of developing nations. The

Sustainable Lunar Activities: lunar activities shall be conducted in a way to minimize environmental impact and preserve the lunar environment for future generations. We reiterate the OST in calling States to conduct their activities in outer space with due regard to the corresponding interests of all other States and to avoid harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies.