



STATEMENT BY MICHELLE L.D. HANLON
For All Moonkind
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Of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
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Thank you, Chair. Distinguished delegates and representatives, it is as ever a great honor and privilege for me to submit this statement on behalf of For All Moonkind. I would first like to convey our gratitude to Director Aarti Holla-Maini, and our deep appreciation for the entire OOSA team for their always incredible work in organizing and managing these meetings. I also take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to the delegation of Poland for the loss of Ambassador Andrzej Misztal, an inspiring and wise individual who is already sorely missed.

Distinguished delegates, For All Moonkind is an entirely volunteer international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. Our volunteers include more than 100 space law, heritage law and policy experts, scientists and engineers from every inhabited continent. We are the only organization in the world with the focused commitment to preserve human cultural heritage in outer space. Our mission is to assure that historic lunar landing sites – like, for example, the site where Luna 2 impacted in 1959, the site where Apollo 11 landed in 1969, the site of Chang’e 4, which marks the first ever robotic mission to the far side of the Moon and the site of Chandrayaan 3, the first soft landing on the lunar south pole – and similar sites and objects in outer space are recognized for their outstanding value to humanity

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and consequently preserved and protected for posterity as part of our common human heritage.

When we advocate for the protection of cultural heritage sites that are beyond sovereign territory and beyond Earth, we advocate not for recognition of a national achievement or one technological breakthrough, but out of recognition and respect for the diversity of cultures that have contributed to these human accomplishments. As Mr. Vega Gomez of El Salvador said in 1958, the technological triumphs of reaching space are not “the triumph of a handful of quiet” individuals, but “the result of culture accumulated through centuries . . . it is the triumph of [human] intellect – the human that is part of us all.”

Distinguished Delegates, we are witnessing a discernable bandwagon effect – a growing support for the recognition and protection of cultural heritage beyond Earth. Introduced in 2020, the Artemis Accords, now with 53 signatories, is the first multilateral agreement to recognize the existence of human cultural heritage in space. In 2023, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, a non-governmental international organisation created its International Scientific Committee on AeroSpace Heritage. Earlier this year, this AeroSpace Heritage Committee announced that the World Monument Foundation, another private NGO, has placed the entire Moon on its list of threatened sites known as the World Monument Watch. The entire Moon.

The announcement indicates that ICOMOS “seeks to establish international heritage protections and regulations for future lunar missions.” This is a curious and over-reaching goal. References are made to the Antarctic Treaty whose parties have recognized historic sites on that continent, and the Under Water Cultural Heritage Convention. But distinguished delegates, we know well that the space domain is unlike any of these other realms. For

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starters, simply suggesting that an area be protected is a violation of fundamental precepts of the Outer Space legal regime: the freedom of exploration and use and the free access to all areas of celestial bodies.

Distinguished delegates, we well recognize the COPUOS and its Subcommittees as unique platforms for international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, for the global governance of outer space activities and the development of international space law and for the promotion of the increased involvement of all countries in space activities. Clearly, there is no body better-poised to assure the proper balance between protection of heritage and freedom of exploration. We applaud and support the submission by Poland which states that Poland is convinced that the Action Team on Lunar Activity Conclusion is the most appropriate forum to undertake the first step towards developing the guidance document on new international rules and practices applicable to the preservation of the Lunar Heritage. We applaud the statement of the United Kingdom which also supports this sentiment.

As we have since 2018, we again urge this Committee to consider the recognition and protection of heritage as the fundamental tool it is to support stability and peace -- and to take the lead in the international discussion of space heritage as suggested by Poland and the United Kingdom.

Chair, distinguished delegates, humanity is perched on an unprecedented threshold. There are many paths to a future of humans successfully, sustainably, peacefully harnessing the resources of and even living and working in space. All of them start with the lessons of history and the obligation to protect them.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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