



**THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

JAURÈSGASSE 3, 1030 VIENNA

Statement

By

the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

at

**The Sixty sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
COPUOS**

Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views

31 May - 9 June 2023 Vienna, Austria

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me thank you for your excellent work so far. We are convinced that with your leadership, this session will also be a success. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Niklas Hedman, and his team for the excellent preparations made for this session. My delegation also aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China, and I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful use and exploration of outer space and as always, re-emphasizes on its principles: universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development, the equitable and rational use of outer space for the benefit of all humankind; the non-appropriation of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies by claim of sovereignty, use, occupation or any other means; responsibility of States for their national space activities carried out by both governmental and non-governmental entities; the non-militarization of outer space; the prevention of the installation of weapons of any kind in outer space; the strict use of outer space, as the common heritage of humankind for peaceful purposes; and international cooperation in the development of space activities, in particular those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries.

Mr. Chairperson,

The I.R. Iran, based on its domestic and indigenous capacities, is planning for a sustainable utilization of space and getting benefits from space to accomplish on the ground welfare. Launching a remote sensing satellite (Noor 2) into an orbit of 500 kilometers using a three-stage Satellite Launch Vehicle (Qased) on March 8, 2022 is an instance.

Furthermore, in August 2022 "Khayyam" Satellite was successfully launched into orbit. The control and operation of "Khayyam", are fully carried out by Iranian experts of the Ministry of ICT through the ground stations located in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Khayyam" satellite-based data will be used for peaceful purposes, including agricultural land monitoring, water resources management, natural disaster management, mining exploration,

natural resources, and country border monitoring. In December 2022, "Khayyam" satellite registered on the UNOOSA website, and the UN Secretary-General was addressed in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 1721.

Mr. Chairperson,

The steady growth of COPUOS members in recent years is a clear sign of international recognition of the unique role of COPUOS as the UN forum dedicated to promoting peaceful uses of outer space. Three main activities and measures put the international recognition of COPUOS in danger. The first is the increasing inclination toward militarization and weaponization of space as a real threat that should be seriously taken into consideration. As the military and intelligence agencies sign "dual use" contracts with "civilian" satellite operators, it is essentially making most operating satellites, military targets in critical situations. Some States have increased military investments in space, defined space as an "arena of military operation," and developed space warfare systems and military alliances. The creation of a space force and the formation of military alliances are clear signs of the growing danger of an arms race in outer space for non-peaceful purposes. It's all in contradiction to Article IV of OST 1967.

The second issue is the establishment of parallel structures outside of UN multilateral scope, which undermines COPUOS functions. Some accords provide a fortified and solid base of cooperation only for a limited group of countries at the cost of weakening the position of COPUOS, its subcommittee, and the UN. These accords neither preserve all UN members' benefits nor were designed to do so. Any multilateral space accords should be negotiated within the framework of COPUOS, not to skirt it.

As sovereignty is a principle right for the UN membership based on the UN charter, the third concern is the breaching of the sovereignty rights of States by private operators of mega-constellations. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that COPUOS should address its historical role to hold the private companies of mega-constellations accountable and responsible and prevent the continuous violation of the sovereignty of other countries by providing unregulated Internet by these companies, because several security threats are burgeoning on the platform. Violation of the sovereignty of States by private companies of Internet satellites is not acceptable, and COPUOS, as the main UN body for the preservation of space for peaceful use, must play its central and historical role for the accurate use of outer space, as the common heritage of humankind for

peaceful purposes. Satellite operators, through their affiliated States, must urge them to adopt a reasonable and balanced approach.

In spite of my government's endeavors, including informing satellite operators of I.R.Iran's landing rights, providing information on the illegal operation of constellations in our territory with the responsible States, as well as formal objections through UN bodies including the Security Council, ITU, and UNOOSA, the illegal measure of Starlink is still underway.

Mr. Chairperson,

Three main aforementioned activities (weaponization of space, parallel structures out of UN scope, and breaching sovereignty rights) also undermine principles including universal and equal access to outer space for all countries, the principle of non-appropriation of outer space, and international cooperation in the development of space activities.

The potential, importance, and impact of space activities by developing countries must be seriously deliberated/addressed, and taken into consideration. Any rule-making or activities that impede or limit developing countries' space capabilities must be avoided.

Mr. Chairperson,

To conclude, the international recognition of the unique role of COPUOS is a foundation to welcome peaceful uses of outer space, to counter weaponization of space, and to avoid the establishment of parallel structures outside of the UN scope that leads to fragmentation among States.