

**Statement by Kevin Conole, Alternate U.S. Representative to the
66th Session of UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on
Agenda Item 6, “Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”
June 1, 2023**

Thank you, Chair and distinguished delegates. Since it is my first time taking the floor, I want to assure you of our support. The United States also would like to thank Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay for his excellent work as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC). As always, the U.S. delegation extends our sincere gratitude to the Office for Outer Space Affairs for their dedicated support of the Subcommittee and its many activities.

The United States again notes with pleasure the successful development of the 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (LTS), as they represent best practices for the safe and responsible use of space. We appreciate the leadership of Mr. R. Umamaheswaran of India as Chair of the “LTS 2.0” working group and the adoption of a terms of reference, program of work and workplan. The United States looks forward to the continued discussion based upon the mandate of the Working Group, and notes with satisfaction the beginning of robust dialogue among States regarding their experiences with implementation of the guidelines.

Chair, the United States commends the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space for concluding its workplan with the completion and adoption of its final report. The United States looks forward to engaging with the Working Group on the new workplan that will allow for the continued sharing of information to promote further understanding and development of effective processes to ensure the safe use of nuclear power in space.

Regarding Near-Earth Objects (or NEOs), planetary defense entered a new era last year when NASA’s Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission demonstrated for the first time the ability to alter an asteroid’s orbit. The successful mission was achieved with the support of a worldwide observation campaign and growing global interest in hazardous NEOs. But there is still much work to be done. That’s why the United States recently released the National Preparedness Strategy and Action Plan for NEO Hazards and Planetary Defense,

which establishes six key goals for the decade ahead, including one goal emphasizing the importance of this committee and SMPAG and IAWN.

Under the agenda item on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (or GNSS), the United States remains actively engaged in the International Committee on GNSS work aimed at creating an interoperable, multi-GNSS space service volume, which will enable improved navigation for future space operations beyond GEO, even to lunar missions.

Chair, the United States recognizes the growing opportunities from technology that satellites in low-Earth orbit enable, including for enhanced communications and broadband internet services, scientific research and development, weather monitoring and emergency preparedness, and disaster response. At the same time, we recognize that close collaboration between satellite owner-operators and the astronomical community is important to mitigate impacts that could otherwise hinder scientific discoveries in the coming decade. The United States appreciates and supports the proposal led by Chile at the sixtieth session of the STSC to create an Expert Group on “Dark and Quiet Skies” to allow for a productive exchange among all stakeholders. This Expert Group would complement the work of the International Astronomical Union’s Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky, which is co-hosted by our National Science Foundation’s NOIRLab. Astronomers and satellite owner-operators within the United States are working together towards a sustainable future, including through the recently published open-access software for accurately predicting satellite brightness, in order to facilitate both low-latency broadband service and future astronomical discoveries.

Chair, the United States appreciates Switzerland’s leadership and the work of all the member states to reach consensus on UNGA Resolution 77/120 on Space and Global Health, which reaffirms the crucial role of space data and technology in the public health domain.

Chair, we note the many proposals that delegations suggested during the STSC, including in its Working Group of the Whole, to enable more efficient and constructive use of the subcommittee’s meeting time. We would welcome a further discussion on these proposals during this meeting to determine whether any of the proposals may enjoy consensus support and are ripe for decision.

In closing, the United States would like to address our participation in the international COSPAS-SARSAT satellite search and rescue program that provides coverage for emergency beacons carried on vessels, aircraft, and individual users around the world. During the last forty years, the COSPAS-SARSAT program, which is comprised of 45 countries and two organizations, is credited with supporting more than 50,000 rescues worldwide.

Thank you, Chair.