

#### **Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views**

Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates,

At the outset, the Indian delegation is glad to return to the fully in-person format for the session and looks forward for its best utilization. We reiterate our wholehearted cooperation and support to you Mr Chair for the conduct of this 66th session. We also express our gratitude to the Acting Director of Office of Outer Space Affairs, Mr Niklas Hedman and his efficient team for the excellent preparations for the session.

We welcome Guatemala and Uzbekistan as the new members of the Committee. The rising membership of the committee is a reflection of the growing importance attached by states to the peaceful uses of outer space and to COPUOS as the forum for addressing the common issues concerning peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. Chair,

Indian delegation, while appreciating the achievement of other member states, would also like to inform this august gathering of its significant accomplishments since the last session of the committee in June 2022.

India's first human spaceflight programme Gaganyaan, made steady progress with the qualification of key elements like launch vehicle propulsion systems and crew module parachute systems. Two major space science and exploration missions are planned for this year, namely, the third Indian lunar mission Chandrayaan-3, which aims for a soft landing on lunar surface, and the first Indian solar exploration mission Aditya-L1, which aims to study solar activities and its effects on space weather. Astrosat, India's dedicated astronomical observatory and Chandrayaan-2 lunar orbiter continue to provide valuable scientific data, enhancing our understanding of the universe and the Moon.

Commercial space activity in the country continued to grow as envisaged in the recently implemented space reforms for allowing greater participation of private sector in space. Indian launch service provider New Space India Ltd (NSIL) carried out multiple commercial launches for customers from UK and Singapore. Number of space start-ups succeeded in launching satellites and space systems they developed, and bringing out unique space based applications. The use of space based applications in government ministries and departments is increasing with the increased integration of space sector with other sectors.

Mr. Chair,

While pursuing its national space programme, India has remained engaged with other nations and multilateral organizations, in the international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space. Currently India has formal cooperation agreements in space with 61 countries and 5 multinational bodies. India supported Bhutan to build and place into orbit a small earth observation satellite. ISRO is cooperating with Mexican Space Agency in the areas of crop monitoring, drought assessment and capacity building.

The ongoing international cooperation programmes including NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) and human spaceflight support projects with ROSCOSMOS and CNES progressed well. ISRO's upcoming cooperation programmes with CNES on Thermal Infrared mission – Trishna, and with JAXA on lunar exploration mission made steady progress. India has been actively contributing to the global climate action efforts and signed the Charter of the Space for Climate Observatory (SCO) in June 2022. India developed and provided web portal with satellite data and products pertaining to Pacific Island Countries named DWIPIC (Data Warehouse for Empowering Pacific Island Countries) which was announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of Forum for India- Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIIC) on May 22, 2023 at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

India also continued its efforts on capacity building front through UN Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific & Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, bringing the total number of beneficiaries of various training programmes including the online ones to more than 3700 officials from 124 countries. In fulfilment of India's commitment made in UNISPACE+50, India successfully completed third batch of UNNATI training on nanosatellite assembly and Training, from 15 October to 15 December 2022, benefitting 31 officials representing 19 countries.

Mr. Chair,

We are encouraged by the steady progress made by the STSC Working Group on LTS and hope that the Working Group will be able to quickly agree on the modalities for the capacity building workshop planned in 2024. We also keenly look forward to the LSC Working Group on Space Resource Activities to carry out its workplan and provide much needed clarity on the legal and governance aspects for space resource activities.

The rapidly changing global space scenario makes it necessary for COPUOS and its Subcommittees to consider reviewing its method of work to remain effective and relevant as the only UN entity dealing with peaceful uses of outer space. Indian delegation, supports the views expressed in the recent sessions of STSC and LSC on the need to combine similar agenda items, for allowing time for discussion on emerging challenges. We suggest a focused discussion on this subject.

Mr. Chair,

The Indian delegation would like to reiterate its assurance to the Committee of its continued cooperation and support in furthering the cause of peaceful uses of outer space.

Thank you Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates for your kind attention.