

**Statement of the Delegation of the Republic of Türkiye at the 66th Session of the
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)**

(30 May-9 June 2023)

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, please allow me to express our thanks and appreciation to you as well as to the Acting Director Niklas Hedman of the UNOOSA, and the Secretariat, for all their efforts and the excellent preparation of this session.

We would also like to welcome Uzbekistan and Guatemala as the new State members of the COPUOS.

Mr. Chair and the Distinguished Delegates,

The growth in space activities increases the importance of the COPUOS in regulating outer space activities as well as of the UNOOSA in executing space-related programs. The need for space-related services are growing, which are seen in multiple areas such as communications, navigation, disaster management, climate change monitoring and geospatial services.

The existing international legal regime governing outer space provides a sound basis for these activities. All states should be encouraged to adhere to the existing legal regime. As one of the few member states party to all UN Space Treaties, we call upon those who have not yet done so to sign and ratify all the five UN Treaties in order to ensure a safe, secure, sustainable and peaceful outer space.

In addition, Türkiye supports initiatives and exploration of non-binding measures aimed at addressing legal gaps and challenges towards achieving the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. On the other hand, we firmly believe that any current and future international legal framework should not impose significant difficulties, unattainable standards or thresholds for countries, in their space activities.

Mr. Chair,

Türkiye has been expanding its space activities and capabilities in recent years. The Turkish National Space Program which was developed by the Turkish Space Agency (TUA) with contributions from national stakeholders, covers the period between 2022-2030 and is a major turning point in Turkish space activities.

Firstly, under the “Turkish Astronaut and Science Mission Program” 2 astronaut candidates, namely Alper Gezeravcı and Tuva Cihangir Atasever, have been selected and announced. 1 of them, who will fly to ISS, will be conducting experiments on ISS for two weeks. It is aimed that the program shall inspire young generations and increase awareness in Türkiye on the importance of space activities. This will be also an excellent opportunity for expanding international collaboration.

Secondly, 4 new Turkish satellites, 3 remote sensing and 1 IoT satellites, have been launched by SpaceX in April 2023. Among them, IMECE is a sub meter resolution electro-optical remote

sensing satellite which has been developed by TUBITAK UZAY. Many of its subsystems were developed in Türkiye. Moreover, new ground stations in Türkiye, have also been established for these satellites.

Thirdly, under the “Turkish Satellite Based Navigation Program”, a project has been initiated to develop a rubidium based atomic clock and validate it on a CubeSat mission. The CubeSat to carry the atomic clock is also under development.

Fourthly, under the “Moon Research Program”, a space vehicle to orbit the Moon and make a hard landing on the Lunar surface is being developed. In addition, various new subsystems, such as hybrid propulsion system, onboard computer, power distribution and control system are underway.

Under the “Observation and Tracking of Space Objects from the Ground” Program, Türkiye aims to improve its space monitoring capabilities. Tracking of space objects is an important aspect to ensure the safety and sustainability of space operations and Türkiye regards this as one of the priority areas.

In addition, new satellite projects for disaster management and environmental monitoring are being planned. The devastating earthquakes of February 2023 has once again showed the great importance of space activities in management of and preparation for disasters. We also would like to re-express our thanks to all countries and the United Nations which offered help during our difficult times after the devastating earthquakes.

Mr. Chair,

Türkiye values international cooperation in the space field. Joint activities with international space organizations including UN bodies, APSCO, APRSAF, international Astronautical Federation and others continue. Recently, in cooperation with the Organization of Turkic States, various space activities have been initiated for awareness raising and human capacity development. A CubeSat remote sensing mission and a space camp training for young students will be among these activities. In addition, TUA will host Space Technology Conference (STC) in 2024, in Türkiye.

TUA is also intending to improve the legislative/regulatory framework in supervising and managing space-related activities. To this end, new regulations for space operations are under development. In this context, Türkiye has also supported and contributed to the preparation of the National Space Legislation Initiative Second Phase Report.

In this regard, we would also like to express our support for the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resources Activities. We believe that the Working Group will contribute significantly to the discussions regarding the potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.

Mr. Chair,

As the sub-orbital launches, human space flight launches and satellite launches increase every year, the need for a consistent and punctual space traffic management system also increases. Türkiye supports discussions on the development of a space traffic management system and calls for a more thorough discussion under COPUOS.

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We would like to iterate once more that Türkiye is open to cooperation in all aspects of space field. Türkiye is of the view that the problems surrounding space activities can only be solved by joint endeavors by Member States, where COPUOS has a primary role.

Mr. Chair,

We would like to reiterate our support for the UNOOSA, COPUOS, and to you for a successful meeting.

Thank you.