

Sixty-sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Vienna, 31 May - 9 June 2023

STATEMENT BY NIKLAS HEDMAN

ACTING DIRECTOR

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), I would also like to warmly welcome you all to the 66th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and thank you for the opportunity to address this session on the work of the Office in my capacity as the Acting Director.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Over the past year and in 2023, the Office for Outer Space Affairs has continued to implement its core mission of bringing the benefits of space to everyone with activities leveraging the role of space for sustainable development and in policy- and decision-making processes related to outer space, including within the United Nations system.

In our work, we rely importantly on collaboration with an ever-increasing number of partners, from governmental authorities and space agencies to international organizations, academia, and the commercial space sector. In this context, UNOOSA is pleased to present you the 2022 Annual Report that highlights all the main projects, initiatives and activities carried out in 2022, and features a special chapter titled “Space Law underpinning safe and sustainable use of space”, since last year we also marked the 60th anniversary since the United Nations has maintained the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

I invite delegations to read through the Annual report 2022 that is being made available on the UNOOSA website. Let me also offer you a brief glimpse into the activities covered in this Report.

Capacity-building efforts delivered great results, with Moldova and Indonesia joining the countries to benefit from the Access to Space for All KiboCUBE opportunity to develop and deploy a satellite from the International Space Station. We continued to enable unique educational opportunities through post-graduate fellowships, including providing access to state-of-the-art research facilities, we led a team from Bolivia to conduct 3D printing experiments in microgravity; and selected the first awardees of the Payload Hosting Initiative and three new awardees for the microgravity and hypergravity experiment opportunities. We also hosted the first Access to Space for All Expert Meeting where our partners, awardees, governments, and future partners shared insights from the various programmes and discussed how to improve and expand the Access to Space for All initiative.

The Office’s UN-SPIDER programme supported countries in the activation of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters and delivered services and advisory missions

in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to strengthen their capabilities in disaster management. We launched a report on international efforts using space for climate action that offers insights that can inform future opportunities for development and collaboration. Our Space4Water Project together with PSIPW held its first stakeholder meeting, and participatory workshop for Indigenous women on their roles and responsibilities related to water. We launched a new cohort of Space4Women Mentors and gathered the 3rd Expert Meeting to advance our work on gender equality and empowerment.

By promoting space law, and through UNOOSA's Space Law for New Space Actors project, we kept promoting the safe and sustainable use of space and helped Member States enhance their capacity to develop national legislation in line with international space law. The Space Law Conference organized in May addressed governance and legal perspectives on space activities in Earth orbit and beyond. We continued efforts to raise awareness and deliver capacity-building related to the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities that lead, among others, toward the creation of an open access e-learning tool to improve understanding of the Guidelines.

Chair, distinguished delegates,

In 2022, UNOOSA also facilitated discussions across a range of topics. Through our Programme on Space Applications, we conducted workshops on Climate Action, Space Exploration and Innovation, Space Weather and Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, to mention just a few examples, and continued our efforts on inclusivity and youth engagement.

The International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG)'s 16th Annual Meeting and the 17th meeting in 2023 as well as several training courses and technical seminars globally helped advance cooperation in the GNSS domain. We continued our support in strengthening collaboration to protect our planet against potential impact hazard by asteroids and work done in this area by the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN) and the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) and hosted the 8th IAA Planetary Defense Conference in April, in cooperation with the European Space Agency.

The World Space Forum organized with our host country Austria brought together a great variety of stakeholders and focused on a pertinent topic of "Sustainability in Space for sustainability on Earth". As the Secretariat to the United Nations interagency coordination mechanism, UN-Space, we organized the 41st annual session of the Inter-agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and held three Open Sessions with UN entities, Member States and other stakeholders: one together with UN-SPIDER - workshop on Space-based Technologies for Disaster Risk Reduction; one in conjunction with the World Space Forum; and third one jointly with CEOS Working Group on Capacity Building and Data Democracy.

Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Office continues to discharge the substantive responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the treaties and principles on outer space. With regard to the United Nations Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space, I am pleased to note that, in 2022, 2,055 functional and 44 non-functional space objects were registered with the Secretary-General. Also, in 2022, 317 space object re-entry notifications and additional information for 12 space objects were received. And, in 2023, to date, we have already received registrations for over 1140 functional space objects.

Chair, distinguished delegates,

The year 2023 is also significant as we are approaching the midpoint of the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and we will gather for the Summit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Summit) on 18 and 19 September 2023 in New York. UNOOSA continues to pursue awareness-raising and capacity-building activities in this regard, to support countries in the implementation of the “Space2030” Agenda for sustainable development. We have also just launched the joint report, together with the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and the European Earth Observation Programme entitled “Supporting an eight billion world – building blocks for the ‘Space2030’ Agenda and the global agendas”.

Chair, distinguished delegates,

On 19 May, States members of this Committee and permanent observers were briefed by the UN Under-Secretary General for Policy, Guy Ryder, about the Secretary-General efforts leading towards the Summit of the Future 2024, and the Secretary-General’s Policy Brief on Outer Space. The Policy Brief will be made available on the website of the Office as soon as it is published.

Chair, distinguished delegates

The Office for Outer Space Affairs remains committed to working tirelessly to expand the portfolio of opportunities for non- and emerging space nations to accelerate the closing of the capabilities gap. We are greatly appreciative for the support, as we engage with a variety of stakeholders and build strong partnerships, to be able to deliver better.

Let me reassure you of our fullest support in working with Member States and other stakeholders across many of our endeavours, from legal advisory services to guidance on space object registration or hands-on capacity building activities.

Thank you for your attention.