

Agenda Item 4: General Exchange of Views

Republic of Korea National Statement

Sixty-Sixth Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

May 31, 2023

Thank you, Chair.

We appreciate your leadership and we are confident that we will make important strides under your able stewardship. I also want to convey my deep appreciation to Mr. Hedman, the Acting Director, for his tireless efforts.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has given birth to the every United Nations treaties on outer space after years of intensive discussions. These treaties have served as an indispensable legal basis to strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

The Republic of Korea, as a signatory to four space treaties, attaches great importance to these treaties. We fully recognize the critical role of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) in fully implementing the treaties and addressing the loopholes in implementation to the extent possible.

Chair,

Just few hours ago, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched so-called 'military reconnaissance satellite'. The launch was unsuccessful but we need to remain vigilant as the DPRK is abusing the UN treaty and bodies to legitimize its illegal and prohibited launching activities as it has done several times.

Regardless of what the regime calls it, the DPRK cannot claim a right relating to the peaceful uses of outer space to the extent that its space-related activities constitute a flagrant violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions. Any launch by the DPRK using ballistic missile technology, including the launch of SLV, is prohibited, as stipulated in the UN Security Council Resolution 2270 (2016). Therefore, its launch does not fall into the category of peaceful use of outer space, contrary to the DPRK's deceptive narrative. We strongly condemn the DPRK for its unlawful act.

We also urge the DPRK to cease its provocations that undermine the international legal regime governing outer space and degrade conditions for expanding international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Chair,

While taking these concerns seriously, collective efforts of the international community to preserve outer space for peaceful purposes should continue.

Let me brief you on the recent updates regarding Korea's space policies and activities.

We established the 4th National Space Development Basic Plan, a comprehensive strategy document outlining our space development goals and objectives, last December. The Fourth Basic Plan, which covers 2023 to 2027, highlights efforts to promote the private sector's participation and aims to build a robust space economy by 2045.

We are accordingly adapting our national governance. We will establish the Korea Administration for Space and Aeronautics by the end of this year. The Chair of the National Space Committee will be elevated from the Prime Minister to the President of the Republic of Korea. We will also develop a comprehensive legal framework considering multi-stakeholders in outer space.

Launched last August, the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter (KPLO), also known as Danuri, is conducting scientific investigations of the lunar environment and identifying potential landing sites for future Artemis missions. The KPLO arrived in low lunar orbit in mid-December and already returned a series of impressive images, including Tsiolkovsky, a crater on the far side of the Moon. My delegation will deliver a technical presentation on Danuri's voyage later during the committee. The Republic of Korea will continue and deepen international cooperation on space exploration by including the ROK-U.S. Joint Statement of Intent for Cooperation on Space Exploration and Science, signed in April.

The Republic of Korea also successfully launched its homegrown space launch vehicle named Nuri-ho, also known as KSLV-II (Korea Space Launch Vehicle 2), from the Naro Space Center on the southern coast of the country last Thursday. The eight satellites Nuri-ho placed into Earth's orbit will be used for scientific missions.

Chair,

The Republic of Korea is actively engaging in various discussions on space security as well as space safety and sustainability. In this regard, we welcome that the UN Disarmament Commission agreed on the recommendations to promote the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) in outer space activities in April. We also expect to reach a successful agreement among States during the UN Open-Ended Working Group on space threats in August.

Before closing, the Republic of Korea firmly reiterates its commitment to ensuring a safe, secure, and sustainable space environment. We will present our position on specific issues under the respective agenda items.

Thank you, Chair. /END/

