

UN COPUOS, 66th Session

Statement of Romania on the agenda item 14, “Space exploration and innovation”.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

The number of government and private lunar missions multiplies every year, new piloted lunar exploration flights are scheduled to begin in 2025, and the implementation in the coming years of permanent lunar bases and cislunar space stations are part of the space programs declared by more than one state. Lunar exploration and exploitation will represent a very challenging space activity for the next decades, involving many member states and non-state actors.

The current lack of coordination mechanisms for lunar activities presents a serious challenge to future missions and could lead to conflicts, especially in light of the increased global interest in specific areas like the lunar south pole. The need to preserve the peaceful uses of space, together with the desire to begin a new era of sustainable space exploration, urges the development of a common level playing field for upcoming lunar activities.

The magnitude of the issues relating to the exploration and use of lunar and cislunar space is far greater than just Space Resources that are already addressed within LSC COPUOS. These issues include information-sharing, definition of safety zones, safe operations, debris mitigation, environmental and heritage preservation, interoperability, sustainability, coordination between scientific and commercial endeavors, and more.

Referring to the Conference Room Paper A/AC.105/C.1/2023/CRP20*, including the report “Recommended Framework and Key Elements for Peaceful and Sustainable Lunar Activities”, presented at the 60th session of STSC and distributed to all Member States by the Moon Village Association, the Romanian delegation is of the view that such issues require discussions at the level of UN COPUOS. The report has been distributed also to the 66th session of the UN COPUOS, and it represents, in view of the Romanian delegation, a good base for further discussion and elaboration.

The Romanian delegation considers that the promotion of voluntary cooperation on matters of mutual interest related to lunar operations, including an official

exchange of information between the stakeholders involved in Moon activities is of a critical importance at this time.

Taking into account all of the above, the Romanian delegation proposes to Member States to assess how to coordinate lunar technical activities within COPUOS, taking into account the complexity of the issues and the lack of time in the plenary meetings.

The Romanian delegation invites Delegations to report their findings and recommendations on specific arrangement for lunar coordination, if any, at the next Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2024 with the goal to agree on the next step for the 67th COPUOS session in 2024.

These proposals are included in the CRP.8, named “Proposal for assessing lunar coordination mechanisms within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space”, already distributed as a document of this COPUOS session.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for your attention!