



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Sixty-First Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS

Agenda Item 12: Future role and method of work of the Committee

2 February 2024 - Vienna, Austria

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Madam chair, Distinguished Delegates

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was established by the General Assembly in 1959 to govern the exploration and use of space for the benefit of all humanity: for peace, security and development. During the last 6 decades, COPUOS has achieved valuable milestones and made significant efforts toward keeping the space safe for peaceful uses and gathering different ideas from the Member States to ensure the benefits of all based on a well-established principle of consensus.

The rapid development of technology and enhancing reliance of different aspects of human life on space capabilities has led to an emerging significant number of private actors involved in various space activities, including deploying and operating satellite constellations in the lower layer of Earth orbit. However, in spite of delivering useful global services, the proliferation of these constellations has caused and will cause a multitude of challenges and significant legal implications.

The gradual congestion of the low orbital layers has significantly increased the risk of collisions between space objects, that can cause more debris, and jeopardizing access to safe launch windows, which is in clear conflict with the principles of equal and free access to outer space, non-appropriation, and long-term sustainability.

Additionally, rather intense light and strong radio signals reflected and emitted from moving satellites have posed damaging impacts on either optical and radio astronomy by making dark and quiet skies into bright and polluted ones.

Furthermore, these constellations disregard and violate the sovereignty of States over their territories and fail to recognize the inherent rights of governments in maintaining security, preventing the spread of misinformation, and instilling local culture and morality.

It is worth mentioning that the Islamic Republic of Iran presented evidence at the 94th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board, demonstrating that STARLINK terminals were transmitting from within its territory. According to decisions of the Board, providing transmissions from unauthorized territories directly violates the provisions of ITU (RR Article 18, Resolution 22 (WRC-19), and Resolution 25 (WRC-03)). The Board urged the associated Administrations to comply with the provisions by taking immediate action to disable STARLINK terminals operating within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard, we would like to recall this information.

Madam chair,

It is crucial to all stakeholders to consider the impact of large constellations on global security, national sovereignty, equitable access to space resources, and the long-term sustainability of space activities. The proliferation of large constellations could have serious implications which is not restricted merely to increasing space debris or harmful radio-frequency interferences. Therefore, development of large constellations should be

pursued with vigilance and in a responsible manner without compromising national security or triggering an arms race in space.

To thoroughly address the above-mentioned concerns, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive international agreed-upon set of standards and best practices that cover various aspects, including space debris mitigation, spectrum management, orbital coordination, end-of-life disposal based on the technical capability of the countries and national interest of States. Immediate action is needed to ensure a holistic and effective approach to risk assessment and mitigation during establishment and operation of large constellations.

Enhanced international cooperation, transparency, and collaboration among all nations involved in space exploration are essential to create a peaceful and secure environment. It is important to foster an open and inclusive environment that promotes collaboration, sharing scientific research findings, data exchange, and technological progress.

Madam chair,

Based on what was agreed during the 66th session of the committee, we proposed adding a new agenda item to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) titled “*Addressing emerging issues on large constellations, including preserving dark and quiet skies*” to facilitate discussions and taking urgent actions on these issues. This agenda item will provide a better framework for constructing discussions about different aspects of large constellations, including challenges arising from and to these satellite systems and also making greater efforts to regulate this area.

Due to the multifaceted nature of such challenging constellations, it is highly advisable to examine this issue in separate items in both STSC and LSC. Since, the large-constellations of satellites in LEO, result in not only technical but legal, and in some

cases, mixed challenges to the existing norms and national and international regulatory regimes governing space activities that must be addressed.

My delegation is prepared to collaborate with other Member States to achieve consensus on the title, scope and duration of the agenda item.

Thank you, Madam chair.