



**Statement of the G-77 and China
during the Sixty-First Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,
29 January - 09 February 2024,
delivered by H.E. Aftab Ahmad Khokher,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Pakistan**

AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Madam Chair,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express our gratitude to you, Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay, a member of the Group, for your Chairmanship of the 59th and 60th sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS. The Group warmly welcomes Ms. Ulpia-Elena Botezatu of Romania as the new Chair of the Subcommittee and assures you and the members of the bureau our full support during this session.

2. The Group also gladly welcomes Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini as the new Director and Dr. Driss El Hadani as the Senior Advisor of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and looks forward to working together to achieve more progress towards realising our shared goal of peaceful uses of outer space. Furthermore, the Group also extends its appreciation to the dedicated staff at the Secretariat for the documentation and planning required for convening this meeting.

Madam Chair,

3. The Group recognizes the increasing awareness of the potential, importance and impact that space activities have today, especially among the Group members. In this regard, the Group would like to seize this opportunity to express its high appreciation for the work that COPUOS and its two Subcommittees have carried out, and emphasizes its role, as the main UN forum, in promoting international cooperation on the exploration, exploitation and peaceful uses of outer space.

4. The Group is willing to engage in the discussions of this Subcommittee to support measures to enhance international cooperation and promote inclusivity and gender equality or balance, as applicable, in the space sector to ensure the benefits of space activities are available to all nations and the peoples of the world. Considering the great importance the international community attaches to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Group is of the view that on-going and future activities in this area should contribute to sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

5. The Group wishes to recall the established principles related to outer space activities, including the principle of exploration and use of outer space on the basis of equality and nondiscrimination, the principle of the non-appropriation of outer space including the moon and other celestial bodies, and the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.



Madam Chair,

6. Several issues to be discussed during this session are of paramount importance to developing countries. The Group believes that in order to achieve the main objectives of this Subcommittee, it is important to concentrate our work in areas such as building and promotion of the technological capacities, transfer of technology and equipment favorable for developing countries, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and scientific technological research in developing countries within the framework of international cooperation. The only way we can ensure that outer space remains sustainable and can continue to deliver benefits to the whole of humankind is by working together through enhanced cooperation and collaboration.

7. The Group also considers it crucial that developing countries do not get left behind or are unfairly disadvantaged by space exploration efforts. The Group is of the view that space technology applications must translate into concrete benefits for developing countries. In order to achieve this goal, transfer of technology on favorable terms for developing countries, as well as associated capacity-building are of vital importance. In this vein, the Group strongly encourages States to strengthen international, multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, including by addressing challenges and obstacles, in particular those that hinder such cooperation, particularly, in developing countries.

8. The Group also urges States to refrain from promulgating, adopting and applying any unilateral economic, financial and trade measures and related actions contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations, mindful that they hamper or impede access to space and space activities, particularly, in developing countries. All outer space activities, including mega constellations and their related operations, should fully respect the UN Charter, international law and the principle of non-intervention.

9. The Group believes that COPUOS must remain the forum for enhancement of cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space. Therefore, the Group calls upon UNOOSA and the Member States for greater support to enhance both North-South and South-South cooperation to facilitate such transfer of technology and equipment among nations.

10. The Group would also like to reiterate its call upon OOSA and the Member States to make more opportunities available for greater scientific and academic linkages, long-term fellowships and further collaboration among national and regional laboratories, UN research centres, other national and international institutions on space matters and institutions in developing countries.

Madam Chair,

11. Recalling the constructive efforts made by all to achieve the adoption of the voluntary Guidelines for the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS) during the 62nd session of COPUOS, it is important to bear in mind that this achievement was the outcome of a multi-dimensional compromise and therefore has a delicate balance. This delicate balance should be preserved in implementing the workplan regarding this subject and should also take into consideration the priorities and concerns of all Member States, in particular developing



countries. The Group and its Member States remain committed to contribute constructively to the meetings of the LTS Working Group and its work ^[1].

12. The Group underscores that the deployment of mega constellations, if not carried out sustainably and equitably, may pose a risk of congestion of Low Earth Orbit (LEO), which would be a significant disadvantage in the use and exploration of space by developing countries. Therefore, the principle of equitable access to outer space, and in particular in the LEO, needs to be observed more than ever.

13. Regarding space debris, the Group is of the view that the issue of preventing and mitigating its creation is of utmost importance. This topic should continue to be treated as a priority with the view to mitigate the creation of space debris and prevent collisions. The Group underscores the need for developing countries to have access to technologies, equipment and methodologies for the measurement, monitoring and characterization of space debris and other space objects and calls for increased cooperation in addressing the issue of space debris.

14. The Group takes note of the relevant non-legally binding and voluntary measures such as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the LTS Guidelines, while emphasizing that implementation of the latter Guidelines would be in accordance with Member States' respective needs, conditions and capabilities, and invites advanced space-faring countries and other actors, especially those deploying mega-constellations, to pay due regard to their implementation.

15. The Group reiterates its commitment to the "Space2030" Agenda which is intended to be a "forward looking strategy for reaffirming and strengthening the contribution of space activities and space tools to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement, addressing long-term sustainable development concerns of humankind ^[2]." In this regard, the Group emphasizes, once more, the need for capacity building to ensure that the required technical expertise is made available to Member States, especially developing countries, to support their implementation of the "Space2030" Agenda.

16. The Group encourages more efforts contributing towards space applications for the prevention and control of diseases and global health issues, bearing in mind the resolution "Space and Global Health" adopted by the UN General Assembly in its 77th session.

17. The Group looks forward to reaching consensus on the scope, duration and the title of the agenda item related to Dark and Quiet Skies and Large Constellations, with a view to recommending the item to the Committee, at its 67th session, for inclusion on the agenda of the Subcommittee. This would enhance our understanding of the negative impact of light pollution and large constellations for the wellbeing of science and society.

Madam Chair,

18. We have indeed an adequate mechanism before us in COPUOS to address space related issues. We must recall that people worldwide count on the UN system to address global needs particularly the needs of the developing countries. In a spirit of cooperation and consensus, it is the hope of the Group of 77 and China that we will be able to address these issues and to



come up with solutions that will contribute to global prosperity and lasting peace through the promotion of enhanced international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

I thank you Madam Chair.

[1] A/76/20 p. 54
[2] A/RES/76/3 para. 6