

**AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT DURING THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

**TO BE DELIVERED BY H.E AMBASSADOR MOHAMED HAMDY MOHAMED
ELMOLLA OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT AND CHAIR OF THE AFRICA
GROUP**

ITEM 5: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

01 – 10 June 2022

Mr Chair,

1. Please allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 65th Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer space. The Group would like to assure you of its full support and cooperation and wishes to thank your predecessor, Mr Marius-Ioan Piso of Romania for his outstanding leadership and dedication to a successful conclusion of the previous session.
2. We would also like to thank the Office for Outer Space Affairs, led by Mr Niklas Hedman, for his opening remarks, and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations made for this session.
3. The Group welcomes the recent applications submitted by Guatemala and Uzbekistan to join the UNCOPUOS.
4. The group aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by H.E. Ambassador Azzeddine Farhane, distinguished Permanent Representative of Morocco.

Mr Chair,

5. The African Group attaches great importance to the work of this Committee in enhancing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and its benefits to all nations.
6. In this regard, the Group would like to underline that international cooperation in space exploration and the use of space technology applications are a priority to the African continent. To this end, the Group also recognises that the application of science and technology to space activities is essential for the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. This is also particularly relevant to Africa in light of its aspirations, as articulated in the African Agenda 2063 acknowledging its importance in agriculture, food security, water availability, disaster management and health inter alia.
7. In the same vein, the Group also notes that Space Science and Technology, and their applications are essential in effectively addressing current and future challenges to social and economic development and sustainability, mainly climate change. The Group

believes that the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), to be held in November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, provides an opportunity to further explore the potential role of space science in combating climate change, which impacts the Continent.

8. In addition, UN Member States have made it clear that space technology holds immense potential to benefit both developed and developing countries. Consequently, the onus is on the Committee to promote equal, non-discriminatory access to outer space, irrespective of levels of socio-economic or scientific development.

Mr Chair

9. The Group would like to reiterate its firm commitment to the aspirations stipulated under its Agenda 2063 as demonstrated in its adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy aimed towards the realization of the African Union vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.
10. The African continent has employed some medium to appraise its performance in outer space affairs to reach greater heights. Another structure of importance is the African Space Week which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2022. The African Space Week provides an innovative platform for African space industry stakeholders to deliberate on expanding Africa's space industry and strengthen efforts to promote and enable intra-Africa and international cooperation on space activities.
11. The African Group is of the opinion that it is imperative that UNCOPUOS Member States, particularly developed countries, redouble their efforts to extend to all states the benefits derived from outer space activities and promote wider participation of developing countries through the provision of capacity building and technical assistance in line with their requests.

Mr Chair

12. The Group also notes with appreciation the work of the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education located in Morocco and Nigeria and calls upon UNCOPUOS to continue supporting the Regional Centres as well as other regional initiatives to promote greater African excellence and improved participation of women.

13. The Group reiterates that benefits of outer space are not just dependent on countries having a space programme, but are cross cutting in terms of disaster management, agriculture, health, education and sustainable development. It is for the above reasons that the African Union Space Programme and Strategy will generate new impetus across Africa and significantly increase the participation of all African States in space activities. In order to achieve these objectives, both technical and financial support is required along with the consolidation of capacity building for the effective implementation of countries Space Programmes.
14. In this regard, it is also important to highlight the collective efforts exerted since 2014 to elaborate the first “African Space Strategy” which was adopted in 2016. This continued cooperation on the African level also emanated in the establishment of the African Space Agency (AfSA) in 2016, with its headquarters in Cairo. The African Space Agency, which is expected to commence operations in 2022, aims to implement and achieve common development goals for the African Continent in the realm of outer space.
15. The Africa Group wishes to note that the use of nuclear power sources in outer space is a matter of concern for the Group. The potential risks of collisions and accidental re-entry in the earth atmosphere of space objects using nuclear power sources and their consequences should be addressed accordingly. In order to ensure safe use of nuclear power sources, the African Group deems it vital that the space actors with proven capabilities in this field, should make available the information and know – how on measures taken to ensure safety of the space objects using nuclear sources.

Mr Chair,

16. The Group welcomes the establishment and progress made in the Working Group on the general exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation, and utilization of space resource. In view of the dynamic emergence of various space actors, the Group is of the view that the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources is to be coordinated at the international level in order to ensure the continued peaceful and sustainable use of outer space, the moon and other space objects to ensure that such activities were carried out in accordance with international law and for the benefit of all.

17. The Group welcomes the appointment of Professor Mohamed Belhocine from Algeria as a Commissioner in charge of education, science, technology and innovation at the African Union and reiterates the importance for enhanced cooperation with this Committee to achieve its objectives.
18. On the issue of the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space activities, the Group recalls the constructive efforts made by all to achieve the adoption of the voluntary LTS guidelines and welcomes the achievement of the defunct Working Group in endorsing the terms of reference, methods of work and work plan for the period 2022-2026. The Working Group can now commence its work towards the implementation of the guidelines aimed to promote safety, sustainability and security of activities in outer space.
19. The African Group attaches great importance to the Space2030 Agenda as adopted in Resolution 76/ entitled: by the UN General Assembly on 25 October 2021 with the firm conviction that it outlines an inclusive and long-term strategy aimed at utilizing the space tools to achieve the global initiatives of the UN namely; the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change addressing long-term sustainable development concerns of humankind.
20. The Group further underscores the important role of UNCOPUOS as the main UN organ responsible for the regulation of outer space affairs and activities, including international coordination and cooperation mechanism in furtherance of the sustainability of outer space.

Mr Chair,

21. In conclusion, let me reiterate the commitment of Africa towards the peaceful uses of Outer Space. To this end, African States will continue to raise awareness to the important role of mobilizing resources to support space science and technology in Africa's socio-economic development.

I thank you