

Statement – Australia

65th Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Agenda item 7 –

Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fifty-ninth session

Thank you Mr Chair, distinguished delegates.

The fifty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee was another welcome opportunity for Member States and Permanent Observers to exchange views on issues related to scientific and technical aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space.

These exchanges underscore the importance of that Subcommittee as a unique forum to discuss such issues, and to facilitate international cooperation to address those issues.

Australia thanks the Subcommittee Chair, Dr Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay, and the Secretariat for their organisation of the fifty-ninth session, again held in hybrid format. We also congratulate and thank the previous Chair, Ms Natália Archinard of Switzerland, for her leadership of the Subcommittee over the previous two years.

Australia considers that the fifty-ninth session of the Subcommittee was a successful and productive set of meetings. We take this opportunity to reflect on some of its key outcomes.

Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Mr Chair,

The evolving nature of space activities means the sustainability of outer space is as important as ever.

Australia is committed to the implementation of the Guidelines for the Long term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We note the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space

Activities, established under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, is key to progressing this work.

We are pleased that the Working Group reached consensus on its terms of reference, methods of work and workplan during the fifty-ninth session of the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's endorsement of this key governance document means the Working Group can now commence its substantive work.

Australia thanks the Working Group Chair, Mr Umamaheswaran of India, for his able leadership thus far and recognises all Members' contributions to date. We look forward to further contributing to these discussions, including at the Working Group's informal consultations in November.

Space and global health

Mr Chair,

Space science and technology offer possibilities in supporting innovation and improved outcomes in public health initiatives.

The ongoing global pandemic has highlighted the important role space science and technology plays in this regard. It is important that lessons learned from this experience support future public health responses.

Australia acknowledges the Working Group on Space and Global Health, established under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, for its contributions in advancing this important work since 2019. We thank the Group's Chair, Prof Antoine Geissbühler of Switzerland, for his leadership, and members for their efforts.

In particular, Australia supports the draft resolution on space and global health's call to share information on key activities, reference documents and plans relevant to space for global health to identify gaps and opportunities, and to raise awareness and promote

cooperation between United Nations entities, international organisations and Members of the Committee.

It is our hope that the Committee will reach consensus on the draft resolution at this session to enable its consideration by the General Assembly later this year.

Space weather

Mr Chair,

Australia is an active participant in international space weather activities; as such, we recognise that enhanced coordination can lead to improved outcomes in mitigating the impacts of significant space weather events.

Australia welcomes the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's endorsement of the final report of the Expert Group on Space Weather at its fifty-ninth session. The report's endorsement supports implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, particularly Guidelines B.6 and B.7, which aim to address the potential negative impacts of space weather.

Australia thanks the Rapporteur of the Expert Group, Prof Ian Mann of Canada, and the Group's members for their work to help strengthen international cooperation in space weather activities.

Dark and quiet skies for science and society

Mr Chair,

Australia appreciated the opportunity to share its views on the topic of dark and quiet skies at the fifty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Australia has both a growing civil space sector and strong research capabilities in astronomy, supported by world-class infrastructure. As such, we are supportive of multi-stakeholder efforts to develop

practical solutions that seek to address unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy.

Australia acknowledges the role of the International Astronomical Union, in partnership with the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs, in convening two conferences on “Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society”. We acknowledge the proposed actions that have emerged from the contributions and insights shared at those conferences.

Australia is considering these proposed actions. We are reviewing current national measures for the protection of observing conditions to assess Australian practices against the proposed actions. We look forward to sharing our learnings from this review at the next session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Conclusion

Mr Chair,

The fifty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee progressed the consideration of several important matters in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Australia looks forward to further engagement with Member States to advance these matters in the lead-up to, and during, the sixtieth session of the Subcommittee.

Thank you.