

Statement – Australia

65th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Agenda item 5 – General exchange of views

Thank you Mr Chair, distinguished delegates.

Australia congratulates you, Mr Chair, on your election to the Bureau of the Committee. You have Australia's full support.

Australia expresses its thanks to the previous Chair, Mr Piso of Romania, for his leadership of the Committee over the past two years.

We also take this opportunity to again convey Australia's recognition of the immense contributions of the previous Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs – Ms Simonetta di Pippo – over her 8 years in the role. We wish her the best for her future endeavours.

Australia welcomes Mr Niklas Hedman to the post of Acting Director, and thanks him and the Secretariat for their support to the Committee.

It is wonderful to be back in Vienna and to see so many delegates in the room. Australia particularly welcomes Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia as new Members of the Committee.

We look forward to a productive and successful session.

Ukraine

We would also like to take this opportunity to again reiterate Australia's full support for Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

We call on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory, consistent with the legally binding decision of the International Court of Justice.

A new space age

Mr Chair,

Advances in science and technology are making space more accessible. This is bringing with it the potential to learn more about our universe, as well as for space-based technologies to improve life on Earth.

However, with such opportunity also comes risk. The growth of space activities has created a unique set of challenges to the safety, stability and sustainability of the outer space environment over the long term.

It is for this reason that the principles contained in the UN space treaties, as well as our ability to come to consensus on important issues in this Committee, are now more important than ever.

As a founding member of the Committee, Australia is committed to engagement with Member States in this forum, and to our international obligations as a State Party to all five UN space treaties. We also strive to be a responsible global citizen committed to safe and secure operations in space and on Earth.

Regulation of Australia's civil space sector

Mr Chair,

The Australian Space Agency continues to fulfil its responsibilities in regulating activities in line with our international obligations.

In 2021, the Agency performed functions under the regulatory framework in relation to launch activities; including oversight of the first planned civil launch regulated by the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) and predecessor legislation in almost 20 years.

It is now nearing four years since the Act was updated by the Australian Parliament. This juncture presents a timely opportunity to ensure our regulatory framework remains responsive to the evolving nature of civil space activities, and continues to build a culture of space safety and sustainability.

The Australian Space Agency has commenced a program of regulatory refinement.

This may include identifying improvements to procedures and practices, and streamlining interaction with industry. These reforms aim to ensure that our regulation of civil space activities is continuing to support industry growth and entrepreneurship, while ensuring public safety.

We look forward to sharing more about this work in due course.

Positioning Australia's space sector for the future

Mr Chair,

In addition to regulatory refinement, Australia is also responding at the broader, strategic level to the new opportunities and challenges emerging from the growing variety of space activities.

The centrepiece of this work is the development of a 'Space Strategic Update' – a vision through the next two decades that will align efforts across Australia's space sector. It will also give the sector confidence to make longer-term investment decisions, in line with the ambition to triple the size of Australia's space sector by 2030.

Complementing this enhanced vision for an innovative, safe and sustainable space sector is the establishment of the National Space Mission for Earth Observation. As part of the first phase of this multi-year mission, Australia will design, build and operate four new satellites to gather critical Earth observation data. It is anticipated that this space-based data will inform tasks such as weather

forecasting, and responding to natural disasters through environmental monitoring.

Implementing the Space2030 Agenda

Mr Chair,

Australia welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of resolution A/RES/76/3 – the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development – in October 2021.

Its development is testament to the Committee's role in facilitating multilateral discussions to encourage that the benefits of space be brought to everyone, everywhere.

Australia is working to meet the overarching objectives of this forward-looking strategy as part of our commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to bringing the benefits of space to Earth.

We look forward to sharing our progress with the Committee in future.

Conclusion

Mr Chair,

The continuing growth of space activities is opening up new opportunities, as well as challenges. This Committee is uniquely placed to play a significant role in realising these opportunities and addressing such challenges for the benefit of all.

Australia looks forward to working with all Member States at this session and beyond on this important work.

Thank you.