

**Statement by Louis Bono, U.S. Representative to the
65th Session of UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on Agenda
Item 5, “General Exchange of Views”
June 3, 2022**

Mr. Chair, distinguished colleagues, the United States welcomes the opportunity to address the 65th Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and would like to reiterate its congratulations to the Chair on your recent election. Mr. Hedman, the United States thanks you for stepping into the role of Acting Director and for your many years of excellent service to UNOOSA, the Committee, and to COPUOS Member States.

Chair, the United States wishes to join other delegations in expressing its strong support for Ukraine at this time. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified further invasion of Ukraine, supported by Belarus, which constitutes a violation of international law. We call on Russia to immediately and fully withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The United States wishes to be clear that an affiliation between the United Nations and the center for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation referred to in UN General Assembly resolution 76/76 is not appropriate.

The Biden-Harris administration continues to reaffirm the United States’ strong belief in the mission of this Committee and is dedicated to ensuring outer space is used for the benefit of all humankind. The Space Priorities Framework, released by the National Space Council in December 2021, reinforces the United States’ commitment to strengthening the global governance of space activities.

It has been a busy and productive year for the United States in space. After its successful launch and configuration, the James Webb Space Telescope is approaching the end of its preparations in space - nearly ready to yield unprecedented insights into the origins of our shared universe and peer back to reveal the first galaxies that formed in the aftermath of the Big Bang. We are also pleased to have seen two U.S. companies successfully launch and dock spacecraft to the International Space Station this year, including the world’s first all commercial crew. Both NASA and our European partners are also eagerly awaiting the invaluable data gained from the planned impact with the minor-planet moon Dimorphos by the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission later this year. We hope these insights further the international community’s planetary

defense efforts and I encourage you all to attend our technical presentation on this topic later this session.

Unfortunately, I must also recall that, on November 15, 2021, one Member State intentionally destroyed one of its own space objects, generating more than 1,500 pieces of trackable debris and likely hundreds of thousands of pieces of debris too small to track but large enough to threaten human and robotic missions. This dangerous and irresponsible action will significantly increase the risk to human spaceflight activities. It has also created a significant threat to the satellite systems we all rely on for weather prediction, agricultural monitoring, and disaster preparedness. The safety of all nations seeking to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes has been carelessly endangered by this action. I am pleased to say, Mr. Chair, many nations have condemned this reckless action in this forum and recommitted themselves to the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space. In stark contrast to this dangerous act, United States Vice President Kamala Harris announced earlier this year that "the United States commits not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing." While this voluntary commitment specifically relates to military space activities and thus is primarily a topic for discussion in disarmament fora, abiding by such a commitment helps preserve the long-term sustainability of space activities for all nations. We hope other member states will make similar commitments and will work with us to establish this as an international norm for responsible behavior in space.

Beyond low-Earth orbit, the world will once again witness America's ingenuity and inspiration. NASA will land the first woman and first person of color on the lunar surface to sustainably use what we learn there to enable humanity's next giant leap – sending astronauts to Mars. There are now 19 signatories of the Artemis Accords. Since this Committee met last year, Poland, Mexico, Israel, Romania, Bahrain, Singapore and Colombia have all signed the Accords. The Artemis Accords establish a common vision through a practical set of principles, firmly grounded in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, on how to enable a safe and transparent outer space environment for all of humanity. We welcome all who have committed to these principles and encourage other nations to do the same.

I note with great satisfaction that this Committee has adopted a workplan, methods of work, and terms of reference for two new working groups in 2022 alone. Both the follow-on "Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities Working

Group” and the “Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities” serve as powerful reminders that the international community can still come together to address the pressing and unique issues of our time.

The United States appreciates our international partnerships with so many of the 100 Member States of this distinguished Committee. Recent developments have shown us how interconnected we truly are, and we must always keep this fact in mind as we seek to safeguard the future for generations to come.