

**Statement by Emily Pierce**  
**Item 8 – Report of the Legal Subcommittee**  
**June 2, 2022**

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Thank you, Chair. 2021 was our busiest year of development yet in low-Earth orbit. The United States made history with multiple commercial human spaceflights and the Perseverance rover on Mars. We expanded international cooperation on the Artemis program, launched the next-generation space telescope – the James Webb Space Telescope – and much more.

At its 61<sup>st</sup> session, the Legal Subcommittee continued to make progress on a range of issues in response to the changing needs of the international community in this new era of space exploration and use that we have been advancing. The United States thanks the Office of Outer Space Affairs, in particular acting director Mr. Niklas Hedman, for its support of Subcommittee members in taking important steps forward despite several unique challenges that the Subcommittee faced.

The United States was pleased to share with the Subcommittee that in December 2021, the National Space Council – chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris – issued the U.S. Space Priorities Framework. This Framework underscores the United States’ commitment to preserving space for current and future generations, including through leadership in strengthening global governance of space activities. Governance of space and space activities must respond to the changing nature of those activities to ensure that all nations, and all people, can benefit from a peaceful, predictable, and rules-based order in outer space. The Legal Subcommittee is a primary forum for the international community to engage in promoting, upholding, and strengthening this governance framework.

One tangible example of this in the Legal Subcommittee is the new Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities. The United States was pleased to constructively contribute to scheduled formal and informal working group meetings during the 61<sup>st</sup> LSC session, and the skillful leadership of the Chair and Vice Chair guided our work to reach consensus on a five-year workplan and methods of work. The United States welcomes that the group can now move to its substantive work, including initial information collection in 2022. We are looking forward to participating in intersessional working group activities. We believe that by focusing on the practical issues facing humanity in these early days of exploring the resources available in the solar system, the working group can be successful.

Another tangible example is the continuing growth of support for the Artemis Accords that was expressed through the Legal Subcommittee session. The

Artemis Accords are a multilateral set of commitments that sets out the rules and principles that will guide U.S. and partner exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond. The Accords are entirely grounded in the Outer Space Treaty, and demonstrate that signatories – nineteen countries at this point – will behave responsibly and transparently as we expand human presence beyond Earth.

One of the principles set out in the Accords is transparency, and Section 4 provides that the signatories are “committed to transparency in the broad dissemination of information regarding their national space policies and space exploration plans”. In this regard, the United States underscores the importance of discussing and identifying potential practical tools for sharing information about States’ lunar activities in a transparent way consistent with our international obligations and commitments. We welcome that several Committee members also highlighted this issue during the Legal Subcommittee’s discussions.

Chair, the United States will continue to be guided by the four core – and widely accepted – treaties on outer space: the Outer Space Treaty; the Rescue and Return Agreement; the Liability Convention; and the Registration Convention. Under the legal framework of these treaties, the use of space by nations, international organizations, and private entities has flourished. We are proud of the space sector in the United States, and we see international law – including international space law – as a key tool to enable these actors to flourish in a safe and predictable environment. In that regard, we recognize the continued importance of meeting our obligations to authorize and supervise the activities of U.S. actors in outer space. One way we do that is by maintaining and updating our domestic regulations regarding space activities. The U.S. Space Priorities Framework acknowledges that “[a]s space activities evolve, the norms, rules, and principles that guide outer space activities also must evolve,” and we look forward to updating the Legal Subcommittee next year on our efforts in this regard.

Thank you, Chair.