

**OPENING STATEMENT
OMRAN SHARAF, CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION, VIENNA, 1-10 JUNE 2022**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the sixty-fifth session of the Committee. I am honoured to have been elected Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I thank you all for your confidence in me, and I assure you of my commitment to continuing the successful work of the Committee.

Together with my colleagues in the bureaux, Ms. Jenni Tapio of Finland and Mr. Oleg Ventskovsky of Ukraine, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Marius-Ioan Piso of Romania, who skilfully guided the work of the Committee for the period 2020-2021 together with his bureaux members for that period, Mr. Francis Chizea of Nigeria and Mr. Nicolás Botero Varón of Colombia.

I also would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Niklas Hedman, and his dedicated Team of the Secretariat for their outstanding substantive support to the Committee and the excellent preparations for this session.

Together with my colleagues in the bureaux and UNOOSA and considering international priorities, we will strive towards strengthening international collaboration, promote compliance with UN treaties governing the safety and sustainability of outer space, encouraging fair and responsible access to space, and encourage knowledge transfer and sharing initiatives between member States.

I am pleased to see delegates connecting from different parts of the world to participate in, as well as contribute to, the deliberations of the Committee. This year I have the honour of welcoming Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia as the newest members of the Committee, noting that this brings the membership of the Committee to 100 States, a milestone mark of historical importance.

I also welcome the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the Square Kilometre Array Observatory and the Open Lunar Foundation as the newest international organizations with observer status with the Committee.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ever since the early days of the space era, space activities are increasingly thriving and its chain of innovation is a reflection of that. This year marks the 65th anniversary of the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth Satellite, Sputnik 1, the 55th anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty, and the 50th anniversary of the Landsat programme and the worldwide evolution of remote sensing from space.

Anniversaries like those I have outlined above are catalysts of the importance we give to space exploration and innovation and advances in space science. Research and development in space science and technology are fundamental for sustainable development on Earth, for protecting and preserving the Earth and our space environment, and in any exploration efforts in the Universe.

Distinguished Delegates,

We are witnessing the emergence of new technologies and the surge in number and diversity of space actors at an unprecedented rate. Space actors have become more diverse and plural than ever before. We should therefore strengthen international cooperation in support of the long-term sustainability guidelines. Exchanging of expertise and knowledge sharing between nations is an integral factor enabling the wider use of space science and technology applications for socioeconomic development and for addressing global challenges, also bearing in mind that the increase in space activities demonstrates the need for governance of outer space activities.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Committee and its two Subcommittees are the unique platforms for fostering dialogue, reinforcing mutual understanding among nations and promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The adoption of the “Space2030” Agenda by the General Assembly in its resolution 76/3 of 25 October 2021 paves multiple avenues in strengthening our common endeavours for space as a driver of sustainable development. We are to work together towards maximizing the benefits of space science and technology and their applications, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee made considerable achievements this year and through the work of our two Subcommittees we are demonstrating the importance of making concrete progress in enhancing cooperation in promoting sustainable development with the use of space tools, and by enhancing the understanding of regulatory frameworks and mechanisms to that effect.

I would in particular like to congratulate Mr. Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay and Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja of South Africa on their skilful guidance of the work of the Subcommittees. Likewise, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Prakash Chauhan and Mr. Umamaheswaran R. of India, Mr. Sam Harbison of the United Kingdom, Mr. Antoine Geissbühler of Switzerland, Mr. Bernhard Schmidt-Tedd of Germany, Mr. Andrzej Misztal of Poland, and Mr. Steven Freeland of Australia, for their excellent leadership of the respective Working Groups of the Subcommittees this 2022 cycle.

Great achievements were made at the sessions of the Subcommittees this year. The Working Group of the Whole recommended that the multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies be extended until 2023. The Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities agreed on and adopted its terms of reference, methods of work and workplan. The Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Spaces agreed that its multi-year workplan be extended to 2023. The Working Group on Space and Global Health finalized the report on its work conducted under its multi-year workplan, recommended the establishment of the Space and Global Health Network and

Platform, and developed the text of the draft resolution for our consideration at this present session.

The Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities agreed on and adopted its five-year workplan and methods of work. The Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space agreed to continue its work on the questionnaires and advanced its work on recommendations to be addressed to States of registry to support the enhancement of registration practices.

I also note with appreciation the continued work carried out by the three international bodies whose establishment was facilitated by the Subcommittee, namely the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG), the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) and the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN). Furthermore, the Expert Group on Space Weather completed the eight years of work and drafted its final report.

I thank all delegations for making considerable decisions and overall advancement under the mandates of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies this year, despite the constraints and complexity of conducting diplomacy under the extraordinary circumstances we operate in at the times of the COVID-19 pandemics.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Office for Outer Space Affairs has an outstanding role in our work as the substantive Secretariat to our intergovernmental bodies and through other areas of work. I am pleased to note the activities being undertaken by the Office through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), as well as in its capacities as secretariats to the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG), and the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space). The Office organizes World Space Forum for advancing dialogues among all stakeholders, builds capacities in space law and policy, supports regional centres for space science and technology education, conducts awareness-raising and outreach, and promotes access to space4all and space sustainability. I am pleased to note the continuous commitment and efforts of the Office in this regard.

Distinguished Delegates,

We have a tight programme before us at this session, and I am confident that this session will once again serve as an outstanding platform for dialogue on important topics before us. With your cooperation and valuable contributions, I am looking forward to the success of this session.