

New Zealand National Statement

Item 4: General Exchange of Views

Sixty-Sixth Session of the
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
31 May to 9 June 2023, Vienna

Check against Delivery

Thank you Chair.

Tēnā tatou katoa. We would like thank you for your continued efforts in leading these important discussions and assure you of New Zealand's full support. We look forward to productive and engaged discussions over the coming week.

Chair

The peaceful use of space is fundamentally linked with peace and the respect for international law on Earth. I reiterate New Zealand's condemnation of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine which represents a grave and ongoing breach of international law.

Chair

As a space-launching State, New Zealand remains committed to ensuring a space environment that is peaceful, sustainable, safe and secure.

In line with this, yesterday the New Zealand Government announced our National Space Policy. This an important milestone in our journey as a space-faring nation. It reflects the outcome of public consultations held last year and sets out the values and objectives which are to underpin New Zealand's space policies, strategies and engagements.

These values include Stewardship, Innovation, Responsibility and Partnership. The objectives include growing an innovative and inclusive space sector;

protecting and advancing our national security interests; ensuring space activities are safe and secure; promoting the responsible use of space internationally; and modelling sustainable space and Earth environments.

The policy highlights New Zealand's commitment to working internationally to overcome shared challenges of the space environment. This reflects the spirit of "mahi tahi" (working together - in Māori, the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand), something which typifies the great majority of COPUOS's work.

In that context, we have been pleased to see good progress made this year by the Long Term Sustainability Working Group. The LTS Guidelines are real and practical steps that States can take to ensure space remains safe, sustainable and accessible to all nations. We commend all States to continue to support this work.

Chair

We were encouraged by discussions on Space Resource Utilisation (SRU) at the Legal Sub-Committee. SRU will be key to recognising the full benefits of space, and especially to enabling the deeper exploration of our solar system and beyond. But new rules are needed to ensure the safety and sustainability of these activities, including for the protection of the space environment. We see the potential for this work to be complemented by related initiatives, such as the Artemis Accords.

These discussions demonstrate that the development and implementation of good national regulatory regimes support the growth of a safe, responsible, and secure global space industry. New Zealand is therefore pleased to participate in the National Space Legislation Initiative under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum.

Chair

We are grateful for the opportunity to discuss Space and Climate Change during this plenary. Our Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate

change and we are focused on working with our neighbours to build resilience. Space-based capabilities have a critical role in helping us understand the complex systems which drive climate change. Space-systems can also help to save lives by providing early warning systems and resilient communications for natural disasters. We look forward to further discussion on these issues.

Chair

We would like to recognise the important work being done on space issues across other United Nations bodies.

We acknowledge the work being done in Geneva at the Open Ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats, which will shortly be heading into its final session. We have been encouraged by the good work of this group in articulating both the risks inherent in space conflict and what constitutes responsible behaviour by States. This work is key to ensuring a peaceful space environment.

We were also pleased to see in April the UN Disarmament Commission recommend the implementation of transparency and confidence building measures for space activities. These measures support information sharing, cooperation and dialogue between States, and contribute to the safety and sustainability of the space environment, as well as reducing the risk of misperception and distrust. We encourage all States to consider how they can best support the implementation of these measures.

Finally Chair, New Zealand has recently published a policy on active debris removal and on-orbit servicing. These set out key transparency and information sharing measures to ensure international confidence in space activities taking place from New Zealand.

New Zealand is pleased to be working with the UK on enabling multi-state active debris removal and on-orbit servicing. We will be jointly presenting on this work

at 1.30pm today followed by an opportunity to discuss this important topic. We would welcome your attendance.

Thank you Chair and Distinguished Delegates, we look forward to a productive session.