



66th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

31 May – 9 June 2023

Statement by Australia

Agenda Item: 4 – General exchange of views

Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates.

Australia expresses its thanks to you, Chair, for your continued leadership of the Committee. You have Australia's full support.

Australia also thanks Mr Niklas Hedman, Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and the Secretariat for their organisation of this session.

Additionally, Australia welcomes Guatemala and Uzbekistan as new Members of the Committee.

We look forward to a productive session.

Chair,

Australia's participation in COPUOS is founded on an enduring commitment to the rules and norms that underpin the multilateral system.

Unfortunately, we are presently operating in an environment where those rules and norms – including the Charter of the United Nations – are under threat, most egregiously as a result of Russia’s illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Australia resolutely stands with Ukraine. We condemn Russia’s aggression and call on Russia to immediately withdraw from Ukraine’s territory.

Chair,

Australia also takes this opportunity to state that we strongly condemn and are deeply concerned by North Korea’s launch using ballistic missile technology. Such a launch is a grave violation of UN Security Council Resolutions, that ban any launch using ballistic missile technology. We urge North Korea to change course, abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs and resume dialogue with the United States and the Republic of Korea.

Chair,

Australia fulfills its responsibilities in regulating civil space activities in line with our international obligations.

The Australian Space Agency regulates specified activities that go beyond 100km above mean sea level, or involve high power rockets, as legislated in the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* (the Act) and associated Rules. To date, Australian launch permits, launch facility licences, and overseas payload permits have been granted under the Act.

Chair,

Australia continues to contribute to international dialogue on the exploration and use of outer space, including scientific and technical advancements.

In October 2021, Australia announced an agreement with NASA for an Australian-made rover to be included in a future mission to the Moon – no earlier than 2026.

In March 2023, two consortia received funding under Australia's Trailblazer program to progress the early stage designs of the Australian rovers. The Trailblazer program is an element of Australia's Moon to Mars initiative, and is part of our contribution to furthering humanity's investigation of the Moon, Mars and beyond.

Chair,

As part of our efforts to promote and support capacity building, Australia is pleased to participate in the Second Phase of the National Space Legislation Initiative (NSLI) of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum.

Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Türkiye and Viet Nam have submitted the *Report on the status of the national space legislation of countries of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum National Space Legislation Initiative, Second Phase* for the Committee's consideration at this session.

Australia commends the report to the Committee.

We thank Indonesia and Japan as the NSLI co-Chairs, and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency as the NSLI Secretariat, for their efforts.

Chair,

Australia welcomes the General Assembly's adoption the Space and global health resolution, as developed by the Working Group on Space and Global Health and endorsed by the Committee. The resolution encourages United Nations entities, intergovernmental organisations, governments and the private sector to pursue effective coordination in key space activities relevant to global health.

Australia also welcomes the establishment of the dedicated platform to promote effective collaboration on space and global health issues.

Chair,

The Committee is uniquely placed to play a significant role in realising the opportunities and addressing the challenges emerging from the growth of space activities for the benefit of all.

Australia is committed to its international obligations and to engaging with Member States through the Committee in support of this endeavour. Thank you.