

National Space Society Statement to UN COPUOS 2023,  
General Exchange of Views

*(To be given by Karlton Johnson on Monday, 5 June 2023, AM under Item 4: GEVs)*

Distinguished Director and Delegates of COPUOS,

My name is Karlton Johnson, Chairman of the National Space Society's Board of Governors, and the Chairman of the Society's International Committee. It is an honor to address you during these vital proceedings.

The National Space Society, colloquially known as the NSS, is a non-profit organization committed to accelerating humanity's collaborative advancement into space with a common set of goals: To explore it, to develop it, and to settle it in a manner that addresses the needs of earth. Doing so ensures the continuance of the human race, and the endeavor will energize us to expand our knowledge of the universe while testing the limits of our capabilities for the betterment of all.

As I glance around this room of Distinguished delegates, I see a great opportunity for us to make a real difference here today. It's true that we all hail from different walks in life: We have differing beliefs, we speak a variety of languages, and we may even have differing values. However, in this forum, each one of us serves as a representative of "Team Humanity". In that capacity, we are truly One Team, all in this together.

Humanity is going to space; personally, I believe that to be inevitable. But our sojourn to low earth orbit and beyond does not have to be done by a single nation; as we are all stronger together, so can that same strength be applied towards harnessing the vast benefits of space to help us address many of the challenges we have today here. And this week we have the circumstance and responsibility to find the best ways, means, and salient conversations needed to create the conditions for the peaceful utilization of space for our team. The National Space Society is present today with you to be a part of that great, universal effort.

On behalf of the NSS, and in partnership with Space Renaissance International (SRI), we want to commend the UN General Assembly for adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These global objectives provide a method for addressing the very real problems of climate change and more, offering us a roadmap for success towards ensuring that we leave future generations with a planet better than we've created: One that will remain vibrant, lush, and ultimately thriving. We owe that to them, and we owe that to their posterity. In the wake of

the damage that has been done to the Earth over the years, everyone in this room knows that achieving said sustainability will not be easy. Seldom is it so with great endeavors. But working together and bringing focus to Earth's sustainability needs will be key to our mutual success. Some answers we will find here planet-side. Others, we'll find "out there". We'll do that by investing in viable low earth orbit activities, CIS-lunar programs, lunar surface initiatives, and many other audacious undertakings throughout the solar system. Through bravery, boldness, and mutual cooperation, the stars will be ours, together in peace.

Team Humanity's unified advancement into the vast frontier will take several forms. A combination of machine-and-human based initiatives will create the pathways ahead. Unmanned probes will provide us with initial reconnaissance about the environments we'll visit, helping us to learn much about them without risking life or limb. After that, humans will have to leverage those machines and others like them to seek out knowledge and understanding with our own eyes. A robot can be a remarkable tool, but in the end, it remains a tool. But it is we humans who can appreciate the wonders we will see, and so must we go forth to experience them. Ultimately, that means humans will establish a permanent presence in space, beginning with LEO and moving to intra-solar locations. This entails living, working, and thriving in that harsh environment; if not taming it, then at least embracing it in a manner that enables us to harness the vast resources there and forming ever-expanding communities throughout the system. And everything we learn and do to make that reality happen can be used to unlock new technologies that will contribute to the sustainability and prosperity of our home planet.

**To be clear:** *We need sustainable initiatives to reclaim our planet from destruction. And we need to emphasize sustainability as part of our space activities. Therefore, in partnership with SRI, the National Space Society places a proposal on the table urging COPUOS State Parties to develop and introduce a resolution for an 18th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), called "Universal and Sustainable Space Development".* This proposed 18<sup>th</sup> SDG aims to accelerate humanity's expansion into space with a focus on creating sustainable capabilities for living and working human communities in LEO and beyond, harnessing the lessons learned there to benefit both earth and other space-related activities. Collectively, we believe strongly that space should be available to all for the benefit of all. Whether an individual, a group, a nation, or a community of nations, the growing \$1 trillion dollar space economy is going to be big enough for everyone to participate in it ethically, peacefully, and collaboratively. Both SRI and the NSS have garnered commendable support for this idea already. With growing momentum, numerous space development and advocacy groups are uniting in support of this concept. Such noteworthy organizations include but are not limited to Expanding Frontiers, Beyond Earth Institute, The Human Space Program, Gen Space, The Mars Society, The Lifeboat

Foundation, The Space Tourism Society, The International Moon-base Alliance, and many others. All have joined with NSS and SRI to champion this proposal, and we intend to bring it to the United Nations Economic and Social Council as well as to the UN General Assembly via two panels in New York at the September 18<sup>th</sup> 2023 session. [Join us](#).

The advent of space exploration has been proven to be a uniting activity. In the past and in recent times, we have seen the benefits of humans from many nations working and living in space collaboratively. Humankind's further expansion into space to establish a permanent presence there can garner the same effect in the near future. We are at our best when we work together; collaborative, open societies in space will test the limits of our knowledge, create amazing challenges for us to solve, and foster international cooperation to highest levels seen to date. Solving our global challenges, encouraging innovation, expanding and sharing what we learn, and planting the seeds for humanity's continuance for eons to come; this can be one of humanity's greatest and enduring achievements. And it all can start here, with you. With us.

By advocating for inclusion of this Space SDG, you can be part of an endeavor that transcends boundaries and nationalities; one that enables both individual entrepreneurial achievement and multi-national cooperation. The scientific, technological, and humanitarian benefits are compelling; the pathway forward open to us to leave it better than we found it.

In closing, we of the NSS, of SRI, and the many others shepherding this effort extend an earnest invitation to COPUOS State Parties to strongly support this proposal. We have a great deal to accomplish this week. Let the agreement to create this 18<sup>th</sup> SDGs be one of those remarkable results of great minds coming together for the betterment of the human race. Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to your positive support. Ad Astra Simul in Pax...To the Stars Together in Peace.

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