



G-77 AND CHINA STATEMENT DURING THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, FROM 28 MARCH-8 APRIL 2022, DELIVERED BY H.E. AZZEDDINE FARHANE, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO

AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Madam Chairperson,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to assure you, Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja of South Africa, a member of the Group, our full support on your Chairmanship of the 61st session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS.

2. The Group further takes the opportunity to thank the Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and Secretary of the Subcommittee, Mr. Niklas Hedman, and the Secretariat for the preparations and planning made for convening this meeting, particularly given the difficulties and exceptional circumstances posed by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Madam Chairperson,

3. The Group underscores its firm conviction that the use and exploration of the outer space shall be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and in conformity with applicable international law.

4. In line with this, the Group reiterates its strict adherence to the principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, including those outlined in RES. GA.1962 (XVIII), RES.GA.1884 (XVIII), specifically:

a. Universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination, regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development as well as the equitable and rational use of the outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all humankind;

b. The principle of non-appropriation of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, which cannot be appropriated by any State, by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation or by any other means;

c. The non-militarization of outer space, which shall never be used for the placement and/or deployment of weapons of any kind, and as province of mankind, its strict use for the improvement of living conditions and peace among peoples;

d. International cooperation in the development of space activities especially those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the benefit and in the interest of all States taking in particular account the needs on developing countries.

5. The Group reiterates that COPUOS, with its two Subcommittees, is the only UN forum to discuss comprehensively all matters related to the peaceful uses of outer space, including

the Moon and other celestial bodies. The Group recommends that there should be greater interaction between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee in order to promote advancements in space law, so that it would be aligned with the major scientific and technical advances in space activities. The Group is of the view that such coordination and synergies between the two Subcommittees can also promote greater understanding, acceptance and further implementation of the existing United Nations legal instruments.

6. The Group reaffirms the importance of preventing an arms race and the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space, and calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively and commit to preserving outer space as a peaceful environment. The Group believes that the sustainability of outer space activities both in the short and in the long-term requires the international community to ensure that no weapons are ever placed or used there.

7. The Group is of the view that the discussions of this Subcommittee should not lead to any measures, including norms, guidelines and standards that would limit access of developing and emerging space-faring countries to outer space. Accordingly, the Group believes that the international legal framework should be developed in a manner that addresses the concerns of all States.

8. Developing countries are increasingly engaging in space activities and in the discussions of COPUOS. While several Member States of this Group have achieved important milestones in space activities, others are only starting to include them into their national programs. This fact reaffirms our recognition of the potential, importance and impact of space activities and their relevance in the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, including through the “Space2030” Agenda and its Implementation Plan.

9. In this connection, it is imperative to increase efforts so that the benefits from outer space activities can be extended to all States. Furthermore, and in line with the enhancement of international cooperation in outer space activities, it is vital to promote the wider participation of developing countries through proactively offering assistance by advanced space faring nations. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the need for COPUOS to devote more efforts for capacity-building in space law and policy, and make the required expertise available to developing countries, facilitated by UNOOSA. The Group also underscores the importance of appropriate funding to enable the Office to provide valuable support for developing countries, including through UNOOSA’s capacity-building programmes.

10. The definition and delimitation of outer space, geostationary orbit, capacity-building and application of international law to small satellites, and the meetings of the Working Group on space resources, inter alia are of paramount importance to the Group. It will engage in the discussions during this session of the Legal Subcommittee and will express its views under each specific agenda item, as appropriate.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.