

Kingdom of the Netherlands – Agenda-item 15 General Exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources

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Madame Chair, distinguished delegates

Madame Chair, thank you for giving me the floor, and as this is the first time for my delegation to address the subcommittee, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mme Chair, on your election. I would also like to express my Government's appreciation for the guidance of this subcommittee by the previous chair. We look forward to a constructive session. Let me also extend a particularly warm and deeply felt gratitude to Ms Simonetta di Pippo, who unfortunately will be leaving us. She will leave big shoes to fill. I would also like to thank Mr Niklas Hedman and the Secretariat on their excellent work in preparation of this session. We would be nowhere without them. My delegation would like to welcome Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia as new members to the committee.

Now turning to the present agenda-item, my Government welcomes the discussion on the regulation of space resources activities in the Legal Subcommittee. The Netherlands would like to reiterate that, with respect to space resources activities, the most articulate mandate for this regulation is not found in Article I of the OST, but in the Moon Agreement. As a State Party to the Moon Agreement, we are thus especially committed to establishing an international regime, including appropriate procedures, to govern the exploitation of space resources. It is, in our view, necessary to consider, incrementally and using adaptive governance, how to regulate space resources activities. My government therefore also welcome the creation of a working group on this topic, under the inspiring guidance of Mr Andrzej Mistal and Mr Steven Freeland. My delegation particularly appreciates the outreach they have done. In the present circumstances, in particular the devastating situation in Ukraine, my government has unfortunately been unable to commit the time and resources to this topic that we would have hoped. However, I would like to stress that the Netherlands remains committed to furthering these discussions and that we are confident that the Working Group will deliver.

My delegation would like to make a few comments, to outline our approach to this issue. First of all, we continue to believe that the emphasis should be on the exploration, or search, for space resources. The exploitation and utilisation, or recovery and extraction, can be reserved for a later stage.

Second, we would continue to stress the importance of the inclusion of views of all stakeholders, beyond the member States and Observers to this Committee. This group would include industry, NGOs, academics etc. We would urge the members of this committee to take their views into account and attach appropriate weight to their input.

Finally, my Government would like to draw the attention of the Member States of this Committee to a working paper submitted by Luxembourg and the Netherlands containing the *Building Blocks* of the The Hague International Space Resources Governance Working Group, with the number L.315 in 2020. We would invite Member States to take the *Building Blocks* into consideration for the regulation of space resources activities. My Government would also point to the commentaries to the *Building Blocks* that will be made available to the delegations in due course.

Madame chair, distinguished delegations, I thank you for your attention.