

Item 6, USA
Statement by Emily Pierce
U.S. Representative to the Legal Subcommittee of the
UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses Outer Space
Status of the International Treaties Governing
the Use of Outer Space
March 28, 2022

Chair, the four core treaties governing the use of outer space – the Outer Space Treaty, the Agreement on the Rescue and Return of Astronauts, the Liability Convention, and the Registration Convention – have served the States Parties well over many decades. The United States believes that these treaties continue to serve the national interest of the United States, other space actors, and the international community as a whole. And consistent with the U.S. Space Priorities Framework issued by the National Space Council in December 2021, the United States is committed to leading in strengthening the global governance of space activities, and we will engage with the international community to uphold and strengthen an international rules-based international order for space.

The United States is honored to serve as one of the depositaries for three of these treaties: the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue and Return Agreement, and the Liability Convention. I have consulted with the U.S.

State Department's Treaty Office regarding actions taken in Washington with respect to these treaties, and can report that in November 2021, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia acceded to the Rescue and Return Agreement.

We would welcome any further information from other depositaries on any relevant treaty actions since this Subcommittee's last meeting. We also would welcome further adherence to these treaties, and hope that those States and eligible international organizations – including some members of COPUOS and some organizations that participate as observers to this Subcommittee – that have not yet joined these treaties will become Party to these important treaties in the coming year. In particular, we strongly urge countries that are active in the space sector in any way, including through their private sectors, to become Party and fully implement these treaties.

As we move towards longer-term, more complicated operations on the Moon and beyond, the United States recognizes that these operations pose new legal and policy challenges. As we announced in the Legal Subcommittee last year, in an attempt to develop a common framework for these activities amongst Artemis Program partners, we developed the Artemis Accords, a non-binding set of principles that set out how we will

implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty as we live and work together in space. The Artemis Accords present an opportunity to articulate a shared set of principles and values to which the United States is committed, alongside Accords signatories. One of those principles is transparency, and Section 4 provides that the signatories are “committed to transparency in the broad dissemination of information regarding their national space policies and space exploration plans”. In this regard, the United States underscores the importance of discussing and identifying potential practical tools for sharing information about lunar activities in a transparent way consistent with our international obligations and commitments.

Thank you, Chair.