

## **USA, AGENDA ITEM 13**

### **GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF SPACE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

#### **STATEMENT BY EMILY PIERCE, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

**MARCH 29, 2022**

Chair, thank you for the opportunity to present the United States' views on this topic. As the United States has noted in this and other fora, the outer space environment has grown increasingly congested. As the volume and diversity of activities in space continue to increase, the chance for a collision rises along with it. As space activities evolve, the norms, rules, and principles that guide outer space activities also must evolve.

As set out in the U.S. Space Priorities Framework issued in December 2021 by the National Space Council, chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris, the United States is focused on bolstering space situational awareness and sharing space traffic coordination information. Working with industry, academia, and international partners, the United States will lead in the development and implementation of open, transparent, and credible standards, policies, and practices that establish the foundation for space traffic coordination among nations.

As we have noted before, the U.S. Department of Defense is currently authorized by statute (10 U.S.C. § 2274) to share space situational awareness (SSA) information and services with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental entities to improve the safety and sustainability of space flight. We post that data for free on [space-track.org](https://space-track.org), and issue conjunction warnings as a public service to the space community. We welcome coordination with all Member States, as clear lines of communication are integral to human spaceflight safety and the responsible use of outer space. These SSA information and services are critical to avoiding collisions in outer space that can degrade the space environment for all space-faring entities. As of 2022, the United States has concluded more than 100 SSA sharing agreements to facilitate the communication

and provision of SSA information and services. Negotiations with additional governments and commercial entities are underway.

At the same time, the U.S. Government is accelerating the transition of responsibilities for the provision of this type of space traffic coordination information and services for civil and commercial spaceflight to the Department of Commerce, which is developing an open data platform that will leverage data and services provided from a variety of government, U.S. private sector, and international sources. We recognize that spaceflight safety is a global challenge, and we will continue to encourage the information sharing and communication, which is critical to facilitating safe and responsible behavior in outer space.

Chair, continued international dialogue and coordination of efforts by Member States to provide space traffic coordination services can also support broader efforts by the Committee to strengthen global governance of space activities. In this regard, the United States will continue to engage the international community to uphold and strengthen a rules-based international order for space. The United States, working with commercial industry, allies, and partners, will promote the implementation of existing measures and lead in the development of new measures that contribute to the safety, stability, security, and long-term sustainability of space activities. The United States will demonstrate how space activities can be conducted in a responsible, peaceful, and sustainable manner.

In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from other delegations about their approaches to and perspectives on these important challenges.

Thank you, Chair.