

FOR ALL MOONKIND, AGENDA ITEM 4

STATEMENT BY MICHELLE L.D. HANLON
For All Moonkind
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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Vienna, Austria
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Thank you, Chair. Distinguished delegates and representatives, it is as ever a great honor and privilege for me to submit this statement on behalf of For All Moonkind to the 61st Session of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would first like to convey our deep appreciation to the Secretariat and the entire staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs for their incredible work in organizing and managing these meetings. We are grateful for all the kind assistance and guidance we have been provided.

Chair, For All Moonkind is an entirely volunteer international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. We are the only organization in the world committed to preserving human heritage in outer space. Our mission is to assure that historic lunar landing sites – like, for example, the site where Luna 2 impacted in 1959, the site where Apollo 11 landed in 1969, and the site of Chang’e 4, which marks the first ever robotic mission to the far side of the Moon – and similar sites and object in outer space are recognized for their outstanding value to humanity and consequently preserved and protected for posterity as part of our common human heritage.

Our volunteers include more than 100 space law and heritage law experts from every inhabited continent on Earth. In January 2022, we hosted the first in a series of high-level forums focused on advancing a practical framework pursuant to which sites in space that are of universal value to humanity may be identified, recognized and preserved. As you can imagine at this early stage, more questions and issues are raised than answered or addressed. Nevertheless, with the exciting news of so many missions planning on returning to the Moon

both in person and robotically over the next few years, our resolve is cemented, and we are committed to continuing a review of the complexities and difficulties of protecting sites and objects that memorialize our history of human activity in space. Today, we ask the Committee to consider implementing temporary heritage protection zones into a potential legal model for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources. This will help build a framework from a baseline of conservation and inclusion rather than exploitation and exclusion.

Distinguished delegates, the COPUOS enters its most significant era since its establishment by the United Nations General Assembly in 1958. It is without question that the decisions made today with respect to the potential legal model for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources will have far-reaching implications for future generations, and indeed, all humanity. The Outer Space Treaty established a sustainable legal framework for space activities which served humanity well as it tentatively explored the space surrounding our Earth. Its most foundational precept recognizes that space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be free for exploration and use by all. This guiding principle has proven both durable and sustainable. Yet it is clear that as humanity continues to advance beyond our Earth, new principles must be adopted to assure success and sustainability, and, importantly, to avoid conflict and harmful interference. The challenge for COPUOS today is not simply to adopt a legal model, but to cultivate an adaptive legal model with sustainable rules, ground in science and engineering, to guide the next sixty years of space activity to include the growth of human communities in space. The next stage of human development relies on our ability to get this right.

The Outer Space Treaty does not consider cultural heritage or the protection of historic sites in space. This is not surprising given that the Treaty was negotiated when only a handful of objects had been launched beyond Earth's atmosphere. But placing culture at the heart of

development policies is the only way to ensure a human-centered, inclusive and equitable development. Chair, For All Moonkind urges the international community to embrace a concept for space that has already been accepted by virtually every nation on Earth: the preservation of cultural heritage. It is a concept we believe will be best implemented in space with the recognition of temporary heritage protection zones.

Culture is who we are, where we have been, and where we are going. It is what shapes our identity as humans. In short, development cannot be sustainable without culture. Moreover, cultural heritage protection is a mainstay of intergenerational equity. The protection and preservation of human heritage recognizes those who came before us, protects the gains of our civilization and allows future generations to learn from both their results and their processes. It reminds us that we do not stand on a starting line as we look to space, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before. In protecting cultural heritage, we are drawn together in kinship rather than drawn apart by barriers and we assure our sustainability.

Chair, Distinguished delegates, on behalf of For All Moonkind, I thank you for your kind attention.

[FOR THE WRITTEN SUBMISSION ONLY]

If you would like to learn more about For All Moonkind, or if you are interested in participating in our future forums, please visit www.forallmoonkind.org and/or email info@forallmoonkind.org.