

AUSTRIA, Item 4

**Sixty-first Session
of the Legal Subcommittee
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Statement by Mr. Thomas Loidl, Austria
30 March 2022**

Agenda item 4

General Exchange of Views

Madame Chair,

I would again like to congratulate you on your election as the Chairwoman of the Legal Subcommittee. Let me also express our thanks to Mr. Niklas Hedman, Acting Director of UNOOSA, and his able team for the excellent organisation of our meeting.

Austria expresses its alignment with and full support of the statement of the European Union under agenda item 4 as it was delivered on the first day of this session of the Subcommittee last Monday.

In addition to the statement of the European Union, Austria would like to highlight the following:

Last year, Austria published its new Space Strategy 2030+, which was developed under the guidance of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action together with relevant stakeholders.

The title of the strategy already indicates our vision for the future of Austria in space - „People, Climate and Economy: Space is for EVERYONE“. The strategy itself identifies six strategic targets and thirty measures to reach these targets.

The primary goal of the Space Strategy 2030+ is to support and strengthen the concept of sustainability both on earth and in outer space. Two of the measures foreseen in the strategy explicitly address the sustainable use of outer space in the context of UN space diplomacy and sustainable international space law.

We witness a constant growth in space activities by both public and private actors. On the one hand the increase of space activities contain a huge economic potential. On the other hand, this continuing growth is already a challenge for the safe and sustainable conduct of space activities. There is therefore a clear need for common multilateral rules on how to act safely and sustainably in outer space.

Austria therefore encourages all States, which have not yet done so, to ratify and implement the UN treaties on outer space and to cooperate in order to develop and

implement new sets of rules. In this context, let me mention the “Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities” adopted by the Committee in June 2019.

Austria attaches great importance to the development of new rules in the field of “Space Traffic Management” and will strongly support the discussions starting during this session in the newly established Working Group on potential legal models for activities in “exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources”.

In September 2021, the UN Secretary-General published his report "Our Common Agenda". Austria is encouraged by the fact that the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space features prominently in that document.

In his report, the Secretary General proposes a high-level "Summit of the Future" timed to coincide with the UN General Assembly's high-level week in September 2023. Preceded by preparatory events and consultations, this summit will work to advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern mentioned in the report “Our common Agenda”.

Austria supports such a holistic, intergovernmental process for global governance innovation, which we hope, will generate meaningful results across a broad agenda that brings together diverse national interests and values.

New institutional and legal arrangements are needed to provide enhanced global public goods and therefore Austria intends to actively contribute to this process as well as to the implementation of the “Space 2030 Agenda” which was adopted last year. Together with UNOOSA, Austria will organise a “World Space Forum”, which will be held as in-person event in Vienna in the second week of December 2022.

The World Space Forum will be an opportunity to discuss how space technologies can support the implementation of “Our Common Agenda” and what solutions or actions are needed to strengthen the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of space for the benefit of all.

In our view, it is of particular importance to address present and future challenges to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities as well as potential legal and institutional initiatives based on existing international space law. We deem a multilateral approach to new developments and challenges, such as space resource exploitation, large satellite constellations, space traffic management and space debris remediation, essential.

We therefore attach importance to the strengthening of the Legal Subcommittee as the prime multilateral body with the mandate to promote the progressive development of international space law for the peaceful uses of outer space.

In concluding, let me again underline that the Austrian delegation will continue to provide strong support to the work and deliberations of this Subcommittee. In this spirit, we are convinced that the 61st Session of the Legal Subcommittee will be productive and rewarding.