

Item 4: General Exchange of Views**Madam Chair Person and Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, the Indian delegation would like to congratulate you on assuming the chair of LSC and assures you of its full support in conducting the session. We also express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for its effective conduct of sessions during these challenging times. We believe that it is critical for States to continue to discuss on how to address the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving global space scenario.

As a major space faring nation, India has continued to expand its space programme to meet national needs for remote sensing, navigation and satellite communication applications, as well as space science and exploration missions. While pursuing its national space programme, India has remained engaged with other States bilaterally and through multilateral fora including COPUOS and its subcommittees.

Madam Chair Person,

There is a need to strengthen international legal regime for regulation of space resources. The Legal Sub-Committee of COPUOS is the appropriate forum for this exercise. In this respect, the Indian delegation welcomes the establishment of a working group under the agenda item on the general exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources and congratulates Mr. Andrzej Misztal of Poland and Mr. Steven Freeland of Australia for their election as Chair and Vice-Chair of the working group, respectively. The Indian delegation looks forward to actively engage in the deliberation of the working group.

India believes that technological benefits offered by space based applications hold great potential for addressing the problems faced by humankind. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest across the globe in the utilization of outer space. The private entities are an important component of this revival, which has opened more and more avenues for commercial utilization of space

based products and services. At the same time, it has also resulted in rapid increase in proliferation of space objects, bringing forth questions of the safety of space operations. It is crucial to ensure and enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities so that the benefits of space technology are preserved for the future generations. The international legal framework, therefore, needs to be strengthened to enhance the safety and sustainability of space for all space users. The progress being made by the Working Group of STSC on Long-term Sustainability of outer space activities in this regard, is encouraging.

The Legal Sub-committee needs to continue to hold exchange of views on legal mechanisms relating to the space debris mitigation and remediation measures, space traffic management and application of international laws to small satellites, as these factors are crucial for sustainable space operations. This would also allow the member states that are working on national space legislation to incorporate these aspects suitably in their legislation.

Madam Chair Person,

India initiated a major space reform in 2020 to promote participation of private sector in space activities. A number of private sector enterprises are expanding their activities within our evolving framework in that regard. A regulatory mechanism for authorization and monitoring of space activities by non-governmental entities has been put in place. This is also being followed up with a national space legislation.

India is a party to all the major international treaties/regulations related to outer space, including Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention. India is also making efforts to implement all the outer space related instruments, including the UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

India has also been paying specific attention to capacity building in space laws. India also actively contributed to the work of National Space Legislation Initiative in fostering cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region for national space legislation.

The rapid pace of emergence of newer space technologies necessitates that the outer space legal regime, should closely monitor the scientific and technical developments and ponder on the legal challenges they may pose. A greater synergy with Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would be useful in effectively addressing the legal aspects of challenges including space debris mitigation and space traffic management.

Madam Chair Person,

India reiterates its commitment to continue working with other nations, to pursue shared interest in space security towards legally binding instruments as well as transparency and confidence building measures, complementary to them, with a view to ensure the safety and security of all legitimate space-based assets.

Thank you Madam Chair Person and distinguished delegates.
