

Item 4: General Exchange of Views
Czech Republic

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the delegation of the Czech Republic, allow me to congratulate you on your election as a Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and wish you success in this position. Let me express our sincere appreciation to you and to the Office for Outer Space Affairs for all the hard work in preparing for this hybrid meeting and for inter-sessional assistance.

Madam Chair,

the Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement by the EU and joins others in expressing solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The Czech Republic condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and undermines European and global security and stability. We demand that Russia immediately cease its military actions, unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We recall Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. This prohibition is a peremptory norm of international law that all States must abide by. The Russian disregard to international norms poses a grave threat to international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space. Therefore the Czech Republic is not in a position to support the establishment of a new Regional centre for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation.

Madam Chair,

My delegation is well aware of the fact that progressive scientific and technical developments and increased participation of private actors in outer space activities create a need to strengthen and intensify the work of the Legal Subcommittee, including closer cooperation with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Therefore, the discussions of the Legal Subcommittee should focus on the topical legal issues connected with these developments, such as space debris, space traffic management, small satellite activities or the utilization of space resources. Such discussions should lead, where possible and appropriate, to results which would strengthen and develop existing principles governing outer space and would be of practical use for international space community. In this respect, we have noted with satisfaction the progress in the preparation of work of the new Working Group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We also support the implementation of existing LTS guidelines at international, as well as national level.

Madam Chair, dear colleagues

Concerning agenda item 11 - legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, the Czech delegation would like to reiterate its long-standing support for the consideration of the issue of space debris in both Legal and Scientific and Technical Subcommittees. The Czech Republic appreciates and tries to support any new ideas, initiatives and practical measures on space debris prevention and removal, adopted both on international and national levels. The Czech Republic is for instance taking active part in the ESA's space debris removal mission ClearSpace-1. Further, the Czech delegation, as one of the initiators of the compendium of space debris mitigation standards, welcomes recent additions to the database and contributions in relation to compendium. More than forty States have already filled in the template or provided information on their practice concerning space debris mitigation standards. The compendium is available on the website of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, and we encourage other States and relevant organisations to contribute to the database.

Madam Chair,

Concerning discussions on item 14 which relates to the application of international law to small-satellite activities, we commend the Secretariat for the preparation of the background document on registration of large constellations and megaconstellations. We note that the document also points to certain deficiencies in registration practices of States in this area. In this connection, we would like to mention recent resolution of the Czech Astronomical Society, which pointed to the fact that uncontrolled launches of satellite mega-constellations negatively affect the rights of other users of the outer space, increase the risk of creation of huge amount of space debris and disrupt astronomical observations and measurements. Therefore, it seems necessary to start finding globally acceptable and equitable solutions that would guarantee equal access to space exploration for all actors involved and would ensure long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Madam Chair,

The Czech delegation supports the discussion on agenda item 15, concerning potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources and welcomes the establishment of a Working Group on this agenda item. In addition, our delegation as one of co-sponsors endorses the Work Plan of the Working Group on space resources, as submitted by its Chair and Vice-Chair. We believe that result-oriented Work Plan of the Working Group, as well as the envisaged dedicated Space Resources Conference under the auspices of the United Nations, will provide an excellent basis for result-oriented discussions on international legal framework for space resources activities.

In concluding, allow me to emphasize that the Czech delegation will continue to provide strong support for the work of the Subcommittee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.