

Statement by Emily Pierce
U.S. Representative to the Legal Subcommittee of the
UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Agenda Item 5 – Status of the International Treaties Governing
the Use of Outer Space
March 20, 2023

Chair, the four core treaties governing the use of outer space – the Outer Space Treaty, the Agreement on the Rescue and Return of Astronauts, the Liability Convention, and the Registration Convention – have served the States Parties for many decades. The United States believes that these treaties continue to serve the national interests of the United States, other space actors, and the entire international community. Consistent with the U.S. Space Priorities Framework issued by the National Space Council in December 2021, the United States is committed to leading in strengthening the global governance of space activities, and we will continue to engage with the international community to uphold and strengthen an international rules-based international order for space.

The United States is honored to serve as one of the depositaries for three of these treaties: the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue and Return Agreement, and the Liability Convention. I have consulted with the U.S. State Department's Treaty Office regarding actions taken in Washington with respect to these treaties, and I

am pleased to report that since the last Subcommittee session the Republic of Croatia deposited, on March 10, 2023, an instrument of accession to the Outer Space Treaty.

We would welcome any further information from other depositaries on any relevant treaty actions since this Subcommittee's last meeting. We also would welcome further adherence to these treaties, and hope that those States and eligible international organizations – including some members of UNCOPUOS and some organizations that participate as observers to this Subcommittee – that have not yet joined these treaties will become Party to these important treaties in the coming year. In particular, we strongly urge countries that are active in the space sector in any way, including through their private sectors, to become Party and fully implement these treaties.

As we move towards longer-term, more complicated operations on the Moon and beyond, the United States recognizes that these operations pose new legal and policy challenges. In an attempt to develop a common framework for the activities of civil space agencies on the Moon and beyond, we worked with partners to develop the Artemis Accords, a non-binding set of principles that set out how we will implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty as we live and work together in space. The Artemis Accords articulate a shared vision

for civil cooperation in the exploration and use of space to which the United States is committed, alongside other Accords signatories. A critical element of the Accords is transparency, and Section 4 of the Accords provides that the signatories are “committed to transparency in the broad dissemination of information regarding their national space policies and space exploration plans”. The United States continues to underscore the importance of discussing and identifying potential practical tools for sharing information about lunar activities in a transparent way consistent with our international obligations and commitments. In this regard, the conference room paper submitted by Luxembourg and Germany entitled “Dedicated tools and practices for enhanced information sharing” (A/AC.105/C.1/2023/CRP.30) presents a constructive starting point for LSC members to engage in such a discussion.

Thank you, Chair.