

 **Permanent  
Mission  
of Austria**

to the United  
Nations in Vienna

**Sixty-second Session**

**of the Legal Subcommittee  
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

**Statement by Ambassador Gabriela Sellner**

**Agenda item 3**

**General Exchange of Views**

**20 March 2023**

Madam Chair,

As this is the first time that Austria takes the floor, I would like to thank you Chair, **Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja**, for your excellent chairmanship, and welcome the new members to the committee, **Guatemala and Uzbekistan**.

Austria is fully aligned with the statement of the European Union, including our full solidarity and support for Ukraine and the people of Ukraine as well as the condemnation of the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter. It also had an impact on the functioning of space applications and casts a shadow over the international cooperation in outer space.

Madam Chair,

We witness a constant growth in space activities by both public and private actors. On the one hand, the increase of space activities contains a tremendous 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 highlight the “Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities” adopted by the Committee in June 2019.

Austria also wishes to highlight the important work conducted by the *UN Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours* in Geneva. While respecting the difference in the mandates between COPUOS and the Open-Ended Working Group, and aiming to avoid duplication, Austria encourages mutual consideration by both bodies of each other’s work. The main Committee and the Legal Subcommittee should continue to contribute to the study and development of legal and non-legally binding frameworks for space activities, especially in the areas of the mitigation and remediation of space debris, space traffic management, the registration of space objects, including mega-constellations, as well as international cooperation and consultation.

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.

Madam Chair,

In his report "Our Common Agenda", the UN Secretary-General proposes a high-level "Summit of the Future" which will be held 22-23 September 2024 in New York. Austria welcomes that peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space features prominently in that Summit. Increased efforts at the multilateral level are necessary to recognise space as a global public good and to preserve it for the future.

Together with UNOOSA, Austria will organise the World Space Forum 2023, which is dedicated to the important role space technologies, -data and applications play in shaping our common future. We are delighted to invite all of you to Vienna from 12-14 December 2023, with an again appealing and relevant programme, that we plan to release well before the summer on UNOOSA's website.

We welcome efforts by other Member States in support of the Outer Space Track of the Summit of the Future 2024 and are pleased that with our World Space Forum we provide a contribution to the public discussion about current trends and future developments of space issues.

We would like to thank Luxembourg and Germany for their Conference Room Paper on „Dedicated tools and practices for enhanced information sharing“. Information sharing is essential for safe and sustainable space activities. Austria therefore supports the approach to use existing tools for enhanced information-sharing according to international space law and in particular Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty. We look forward to the further discussion on that proposal about current practice and possible organized and standardized procedures in that regard.

Austria attaches great importance to the continued discussions during this session in the *Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities*. I would also like to inform you that we are planning an evening event during the UN COPUOS in June on the topic "Space Resources: Chances and Challenges". The event will inform the Austrian interested public about the opportunities and legal challenges related to space resources. It will also be open to UN-COPUOS delegates. We will send out relevant information via UNOOSA.

Madam Chair,

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 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Legal Subcommittee will be productive and rewarding.

Thank you