

**Statement of the Pakistan Delegation at the
62nd Session of the Legal Subcommittee (STSC) of the United
Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
20 - 31 March 2023**

Agenda Item No. 3: General Exchange of Views

Madam Chair,

We would like to offer our full support on your Chairpersonship of the 62nd session of this subcommittee.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China under this agenda item and has the following remarks to deliver in its national capacity.

Madam Chair,

Pakistan is a state party to all the five UN treaties on outer space, including the Moon Agreement. We reaffirm the principle that space is the common heritage of humankind and not subject to national appropriation by claims of sovereignty. It should be used for peaceful purposes and should remain accessible to all nations on non--discriminatory basis, irrespective of their level of scientific, technical or economic development.

Madam Chair,

Outer space is becoming increasingly congested, competitive as well as contested. With the entry of the private sector, the number of actors in outer space is on the rise. We are also witnessing a clear trend towards unilateral national legislation governing space activities which may be at odds with obligations emanating from international instruments. In the face of these developments, the international legal regime governing and regulating space activities needs to evolve through a transparent, inclusive and democratic approach. This is of the utmost importance to ensure the rule of law in outer space; safety, security and sustainability of space operations; as well as equitable access to space for all states without any discrimination. While voluntary norms to regulate behaviour in space are useful, they cannot be a substitute for legally binding instruments. As the primary multilateral forum for progressive development of the legal regime and governance of outer space activities, the Legal Subcommittee has an important role to play in this regard.

Madam Chair,

Space traffic management has also acquired ever greater importance with the crowding in outer space. There is a need for a multifaceted approach to space traffic management for sustainable and interference-free space operations. While setting up an international legal framework for space traffic management, a UN-based information-sharing mechanism should be established, comprising a database on space objects and events in space and respective procedures for its operation. Pakistan is also concerned about the proliferation of space debris and the increased possibility of collisions and interference with the operation of space objects, particularly in the Low Earth Orbit (LEO). As far as our national practice is concerned, due consideration is given to prevent space collision and interference mitigations to another spacecraft by sharing details related to Radio Frequency (RF) compatibility and Orbit and Spectrum Resource (OS&R) during satellite Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) and in-orbit Testing (IOT), drifting and de-orbiting.

Madam Chair,

With the ongoing technological advancements, exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources is becoming a distinct possibility. The international legal system, however, continues to lag behind. Pakistan believes that the fundamental principles enshrined in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty provide us the basic legal framework. These include non-appropriation, peaceful use, protection of the space environment and the utilisation of space in the interest of all countries, especially developing countries.

The development of applicable relevant norms and rules in this area must conform to these principles and should take place through a multilateral approach from the UN platform. It should also be fully responsive to the special needs of developing countries and emerging space nations.

Pakistan, therefore, welcomes the work of the Working Group on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources and its substantive items being deliberated.

Madam Chair,

Pakistan's national space Agency, SUPARCO, is mandated to regulate, control and authorise all activities related to outer space in the country. It is presently formulating the National Space Policy (NSP), which will promote the use of space technology and its applications for socio-economic development while remaining fully consistent with Pakistan's obligations under the relevant international legal instruments. It will ensure that our national space activities

will be undertaken in a safe, secure and sustainable manner without impeding nascent technological development.

Madam Chair,

The Geo-Stationary Orbit (GSO) provides unique potential for access to communication and information, in particular for assisting developing countries in pursuing socio-economic development. The GSO is a limited natural resource and an integral part of outer space which is supposed to be made available to all countries on an equitable basis irrespective of their technical capacities. However, it is obvious that the current dispensation governing access to the geostationary orbit is far from perfect and is suboptimal in protecting the interests of developing countries which are late entrants into the space arena and have fledgling capacities.

Accordingly, we believe that this Subcommittee should play its due role in addressing this genuine and persistent issue that continues to negatively impact the access of developing countries to the geostationary orbit. We share the view that there are practices and technical regulations which if adjusted, in close coordination with the ITU, can lead to fairer and more equitable access to the geostationary orbit for space emerging and aspiring nations.

Madam Chair,

Pakistan has been a strong and consistent proponent of the Prevention of Arms Race in Outer Space. We are against weaponization of outer space in all its possible manifestations. It is disappointing to note that countries are already treating space as a war-fighting domain and building relevant military capabilities. Similarly, anti-satellite tests, not least because of their debris generating effect, remain a matter of grave concern. We believe that there is a need to address gaps in the international space laws with a view to ensuring that no one threatens peaceful activities and applications of space technologies for socio-economic development.

Madam Chair,

We look forward to a fruitful exchange of views among member states during this important session of the subcommittee.

I thank you.
