

Israel's Statement to the LSC 2023 under General exchange of views

**Thank you**, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend you, as well as the Acting Director of UNOOSA and the secretariat for your excellent work and wish you a successful session.

Since the last LSC session, the State of Israel has been an **active player** in the field of space law for the development of legal practices and standards aimed at promoting the Israeli space industry and international cooperation in space projects.

Israel has continued to develop its own **national space legislation**, which is expected to reflect its international obligations and standards with respect to space activities. We are in the process of elaborating an initial draft. However, there is still a significant legislative process ahead.

Israel also continues to **promote international cooperation**.

Mentioning the recent events:

The Israeli Space Agency, in coordination with SpaceIL, is expected to support the **Beresheet-2** mission to the Moon with a substantial cooperation with other partners, including NASA. To this end, a Joint Statement of Intent was signed in January 2023 between ISA and NASA.

In addition, Last month ISA and NASA signed an MOU regarding their cooperation on the Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite (**ULTRASAT**) mission. The ULTRASAT is a space-borne near ultraviolet telescope with a unique large field of view. The mission, led by the Weizmann Institute of Science and ISA in collaboration with DESY from Germany, is funded and expected to be launched by NASA during 2026. The mission will show that small satellites can achieve breakthrough science at an affordable price.

Madam Chair

As the Senior Deputy Legal Adviser of the Israeli MFA, I have the honor to **lead the Legal Team** that provides legal advice on space law to the Israeli Government.

Our Space Law Team has also **reached out** to the Israeli space private sector, including industry, start-ups, R&Ds and academia, in order to ensure that the it is familiar with legal obligations and standards that apply to space activities. We believe that these interactions offer a valuable opportunity for constructive dialogue, which strengthen the awareness to and understanding of legal rules and norms among the relevant players in Israel.

We also **promote space law education**. Space law is taught in different academic institutes in Israel, both in specific space law courses

and as part of general international law courses, and is also presented in high schools and events open to the public.

Israel has hosted this year again the executive program of the **International Space University**. This ISU Program, which includes top space-related lectures, is aimed at creating a multi-disciplinary and thought provoking process. It includes also sessions on theoretical and practical aspects of space law.

Another annual events that Israel holds since 2005, are the Israeli space week and the Annual International **Ramon Space Conference**. Both held every year around the first week of February in memory of the accident of the Columbia space shuttle and the loss of its crew. This year we mark 20 years to the Columbia disaster, an incident that shaped the Israeli space community for the past two decades.

The Ramon Conference this year included a **panel on practical aspects of space law** related to the AX1/Rakia Mission, which was the first commercially crewed private spaceflight to the International Space Station. We took it as a legal case study. The panel was composed of three legal experts: the Associate General Counsel for International Law at NASA, representing the launching state point of view; a private lawyer from a U.S. law firm that represented the private astronaut Eytan Stibbe; and a representative of the Government of

Israel as the state of nationality of Mr. Stibbe. Together, we covered different angles of the legal envelope of the AX1-Rakia mission.

I should say that our **Space Law Team has learned a lot** from the legal preparations for this Mission. As it was the first time an Israeli national travelled to space in private capacity, the team had mapped and examined the legal implications and responsibilities of Israel, as the State of nationality.

Madam Chair,

As private entities increase their involvement in space activities, as part of the New Space era, and as a direct result of the rise in startups and experiments in this area, there is a **significant growth in the private practice of space law** in Israel.

The increase of private activities requires taking into account some relatively **new considerations**, such as the need to manage in-orbit risks to customers and third parties. This need is a result of, among other things, increased liability imposed by customers, a more crowded orbit, and new capabilities of space systems. We see more thought being given to novel risk management methods as well as increased interest in in-orbit insurance, while companies can limit some liability by contractually shifting risk.

I would like to share **some interesting legal issues** from the past year related to Israeli private and governmental space activities.

For example, a private Israeli company that was interested in procuring a foreign satellite that has been already launched and operated successfully in space. The Israeli private company wanted to transfer all operations to Israel, which brought up the question of the legal implications regarding the international **responsibility** of the Israel, resulting from the purchase.

Another interesting case concerns the legal, regulatory and strategic aspects of what we called the '**Space Hummus**' Project. It is a synthetic biology experiment demonstrating control over food plant growth in a sub-gravity environment on board of the International Space Station. There is currently a follow-up project to land the first scientific food greenhouse on the moon.

In Addition, private Israeli entities are active participants in **Lunar activities**. Commercial agreements are being negotiated and signed for Lunar transport of Israeli technology onboard foreign Lunar transport vehicles. Possible future joint lunar activities would require discussions on the legal aspects thereof.

In the context of lunar activities, Israel takes pride in being a part of the Artemis Accords and hopes for successful discussions under the COPUOS Space Resources Working Group.

My delegation would like to wish YOU, Madam Chair, the Acting Director of UNOOSA, the Secretariat and all Member States, a fruitful and productive session.

Thank you.