

Statement

by

the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

at

the Sixty-Third Session of

the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS

Agenda item 4: General exchange of views

15 - 26 April, 2024

Vienna, Austria

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude on your assumption as the Chair of this important committee. We are certain that, under your leadership, we will have a successful session this year.

The legal issues surrounding outer space are complex and multifaceted. Some of the main challenges in the legal aspect of outer space inter alia includes, lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework regarding ownership and exploitation of space resources, space debris and environmental concerns, large- constellations, military activities and space security, commercial space activities as well as jurisdiction and enforcement.

The growing involvement of private sector in satellite launching activities, space tourism, and commercial exploitation of space resources brings about legal challenges related to issues such as licensing, liability and intellectual property rights.

The exploration, exploitation and utilization of outer space should be exclusively devoted to peaceful purposes and the collective benefit of humanity. Therefore, a collaborative effort is needed to uphold, reinforce, and enact the principles governing the peaceful utilization of outer space, which include ensuring fair, non-discriminatory and equitable access.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that all activities in outer space, including those involving large-constellations and associated operations, should be in full conformity with the UN Charter, international space law, and the principle of non-intervention. Any operations by large-constellations within a territory of a state must respect state's national regulations and legislations.

In this context, it is important to note that the Islamic Republic of Iran provided all necessary documentation and relevant evidence during the 94th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board, demonstrating that STARLINK terminals were transmitting from within its territory. As per the Board's decision, transmitting from unauthorized territories directly violates the provisions of RR Article 18, Resolution 22 (WRC19), and Resolution 25 (WRC03).

We take positive note of the recommendation of the 61st Session of STSC to the Committee that the item entitled “*Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations: addressing emerging issues and challenges*” to be included on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for its sessions to be held in 2025 to 2029 as a single item for discussion. However, as highlighted in the same session, the topic of satellite constellation encompasses both

technical and legal dimensions and requires appropriate attention in the Legal Subcommittee meetings.

Mr. Chairman,

The geostationary orbit (GSO), represents a limited natural resource. To ensure fair access for all states irrespective of their degree of economical or scientific development, we advocate for a fair, equitable and efficient utilization of GSO.

The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses concern regarding the potential impact of possible regulations of traffic management. Such regulations may present challenges to the access and participation of states in space activities. Furthermore, inadequate technological capabilities and financial resources could affect considerably the ability of states to implement and comply with those regulations, creating barriers to entry and hindering the benefits of space exploration and satellite launching activities.

Imposing and/or maintaining unilateral sanctions that impede our peaceful space programs are unequivocally detrimental and incompatible with the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and the peaceful uses of outer space. Iran continues to advance its space activities at an accelerated pace despite continuous illegal unilateral measures imposed and /or maintained. This determination reflects our commitment to further peaceful space exploration. In line with the development of space programs of our country, the Iranian remote sensing satellite PARS was launched into space using Soyuz launcher on February 29, 2024.

The international conference in Vienna, coincide with the 63rd session of the Legal Subcommittee, presents a significant opportunity to engage in discussions on establishment of regulatory frameworks related to the exploration, exploitation, and utilization of space resources.

Exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources must adhere to the fundamental principles enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty. Upholding the principle that outer space activities should benefit all states and be conducted in the spirit of international cooperation is paramount. Discussions within the Working Group should maintain an inclusive, constructive, and consensus-based approach, guided by the principles outlined in relevant UN space treaties. Prioritize the interests of developing countries and emphasize the concept of the common heritage of mankind in space exploration will ultimately promote long-term sustainability and environmental protection in all space endeavors.

We are of the view that the “*Artemis Accords*” unacceptable as they advocate for the commercialization and exploitation of space resources without adequate regard to the equitable distribution of benefits among all states, and any framework governing space resource utilization should prioritize principles of equity, sustainability, and shared benefits. The current framework exacerbates existing disparities and inequalities among states, as it fails to address the equitable distribution of benefits of space resources.

The Islamic Republic of Iran calls upon the Committee to take a more active role in promoting multilateral and inclusive approaches to space governance. We believe that COPUOS should facilitate comprehensive, transparent, and universally accepted frameworks that prioritize

peaceful and equitable uses of outer space. This requires meaningful engagement and cooperation among member states.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on relevant international documents and resolutions particularly the resolution 2916 of 9 November 1972, the international community condemns the dissemination of television programs that promote violence, armed activities and hate speech through satellite television broadcasts thereby harming national security, territorial integrity and the principle of state sovereignty. The importance of using satellite television for peaceful purposes without compromising cultural values, tolerance, and human rights has been reaffirmed by many international instruments and relevant UN resolutions. Hence, this committee shall make every effort necessary in full conformity with its constituencies, to strengthen current norms in this regard.

Last but not least, Capacity-building, education, training, and technical cooperation are essential pillars that are needed to support the space activities of developing countries. Iran stands committed to working collaboratively with the international community to ensure the peaceful, sustainable, and equitable use of outer space. My delegation is of the view that by addressing the challenges as enumerated above; we would be better prepared to pave the way for a future where space exploration benefits all humanity.

Thank you