

Statement by the Portuguese Delegation on Point 4 General Exchange of Views, at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS, on 6 February 2020.

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Being the first time that my delegation speaks in this session, I would like to first congratulate you on your election as Chair of Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and to assure you of the full support of my delegation to the successful work of this Subcommittee. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Office of Outer Space Affairs for the excellent work in the preparation and management of this meeting. My delegation wishes to welcome the new members of COPUOS, the Dominican Republic, Rwanda and Singapore.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, Portugal strongly supports and participates in the development of space science and technology and their applications for peaceful uses. Furthermore, it considers that space science and technology are essential to address successfully the current and future challenges of socioeconomic development and sustainability. In particular in regard to communication and navigation systems, natural disaster management and emergency response, food security, climate change and natural resources management and more generally to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Furthermore, Portugal considers as a matter of priority the strengthening of the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful uses and that COPUOS should continue to consider

the broader perspective of space security, which is essential in ensuring the safe and responsible conduct of space activities, in particular to promote international, regional and interregional cooperation.

To achieve the two previous goals it is crucial that the long term sustainability of outer space activities be assured. Portugal welcomes the adoption by the Committee of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as contained in annex II to the report of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee and will ensure that the guidelines are implemented to the greatest extent feasible and practicable. However, the work of this Subcommittee on this field is far from being finished and the questions regarding the sustainability of outer space activities will continue to grow faster in the future. Portugal delegation is committed to the establishment of the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the working group on the long term sustainability of outer space activities at this session and is willing to participate and contribute to achieve its objectives in the years ahead. My delegation is of the view that consensus should be rapidly achieved as regards the election of the bureau of the working group.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, my delegation would like to emphasize that today, more than ever, the multiplication of actors and satellites, the sustainability of an increasingly crowded orbital environment is a concern and requires the attention of this this Committee and its Subcommittees.

Recently, Mega Constellations of satellites started being deployed. By next year, they will approximately double the

number of satellites operating in low orbits. On a larger time scale, the plans are to launch some tens of thousands of satellites.

In addition to the local risks posed to the orbital environment, Astronomers are becoming concerned about the harmful effects that result from these large numbers of objects to Astronomical sensors and observations and for advancing our observation and knowledge of the Universe.

It is clear that these large numbers of objects significantly change the orbital environment and create new conditions that must be taken into account in the search for solutions that promote socioeconomic development and also that the disadvantages do not outweigh the benefits.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, let me now describe very briefly some recent developments regarding space activities in Portugal. Following the development, and current process of implementation of the national strategy for space, named Portugal Space 2030, the main fields of focus are Earth Observation for Sustainable Development, Space Safety and Space Transportation and Telecommunications. The strategy involves a plan to attract national, European, public and private investment in space related activities for the period of 2020-2030. The implementation of the Portugal Space 2030 strategy includes four complementary instruments, namely: A new legal regime through the “Space Law” approved in 2018; the creation of a space agency “Portugal Space” installed last year; the support for new space industries; and the launch of the “Azores International Satellite Launch Program” for the launch of mini

and micro satellites in the central area of the North Atlantic ocean.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, the Azores International Satellite Launch Program, is a way to increase the use of outer space for Earth observation, natural disaster management and emergency response, sustainable use of natural resources, ocean pollution control and climate change, in particular to increase the South-North collaboration in the North Atlantic. Furthermore Portugal Space will benefit from a close association with the Atlantic International Research Centre, AIR CENTRE (<https://aircentre.org/>), designed for south-north cooperation in the fields of Space, Atmospheric Sciences, Oceanography, Fisheries, Climate Change and Energy to address the global changes in the Atlantic Ocean. This year in Oporto an International Conference organized by the Portuguese Space Agency will take place on 29-30 June under the theme “Clean Oceans with Clean Space”.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, I can assure you that Portugal Space is committed to international and regional cooperation in the field of outer space applications and welcomes opportunities for collaboration.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, thank you for your attention

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