

AUSTRALIA, Item 13

59th Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Agenda item 13 – Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Thank you, Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this Subcommittee. We look forward to a successful and productive session.

Additionally, we wish the Director of the Office of Outer Affairs, Ms Simonetta di Pippo, all the best in her future endeavours. We thank her for her support and leadership within this Committee over the past 8 years.

Mr Chair,

Australia is committed to the development and implementation of rules and norms that seek to ensure the safety, stability and sustainability of outer space. The Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines) provide an effective framework to support this outcome.

Implementation of the LTS Guidelines

Australia continues to undertake practical steps to implement the LTS Guidelines. Our national regulatory framework includes measures which require the space sector to consider the safety and sustainability of their outer space activities.

For example, the revision of Australia's civil space legislation established the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018*, which introduced a requirement that approval of certain launch activities – namely Australian launch permits and overseas payload permits – include a debris mitigation strategy. Under the Act, a debris mitigation strategy must (among other requirements) be based on

an internationally-recognised guideline or standard for debris mitigation. It must also describe mitigation measures planned for orbital debris arising from the proposed launch.

The requirement for a debris mitigation strategy addresses the LTS Guidelines, namely:

- A.2, which encourages consideration of a number of elements when developing, revising or amending national regulatory frameworks for outer space activities; and
- A.3, which relates to the supervision of national space activities.

Such implementation of the LTS Guidelines through legislation is further supported through policy measures and industry outreach. For example, we are working with our domestic space research and industry sectors to understand their awareness, perspectives and activities related to Australia's implementation of the LTS Guidelines as part of building a culture of safety and sustainability, as well as informing our contribution to discussions in the LTS 2.0 working group.

The broad objective of this work is to identify best practices, and gaps for further research and development, in Australia's national implementation of the LTS Guidelines as part of our domestic and multilateral efforts to build a culture of safety and sustainability in the use and exploration of outer space.

The Australian Government will continue to work closely with our space sector on implementation of the LTS Guidelines. We look forward to sharing more of our experiences with you.

LTS 2.0 Working Group

Mr Chair,

Australia strongly supports the aims of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. In our view, the

sharing of experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation of the Guidelines is key to raising awareness of, and facilitating capacity building in, implementation of the LTS Guidelines as a whole.

We are pleased with the progress that has been made on the terms of reference, methods of work and five-year workplan, and appreciate the constructive way in which Member States have engaged in these discussions. We thank the Chair and the Secretariat for convening intersessional meetings to enable further consultation on these governance arrangements.

Our attention now turns to the important task of examining the implementation of the LTS Guidelines with a view to: identifying and studying challenges; sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation; and raising awareness and building capacity. The Working Group has a substantial task to complete in five years; however, Australia is positive that it can be achieved if we continue to come together in good faith as it commences its work. We extend our full support to the Chair, Umamaheswaran R (India), in his efforts to guide the Working Group in delivering on its objectives.

Conclusion

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

We look forward to continuing to engage with the Committee as we work to develop principles and norms that help support a safer and more sustainable outer space environment.

Thank you.