



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

**Finland's Statement in the 59th session of the Technical and Scientific Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Hybrid meeting, 7-18 February 2022**

Agenda Item 13 – Long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Thank you Madame Chair, Good morning/afternoon.

Since this is the first time I take the floor during this session, let me thank you Mr Chair, and the Secretariat, for your continuous efforts to make this hybrid meeting a success.

Mr Chair, distinguished Delegates,

Finland welcomes the adoption of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities by the Committee in 2019, and their subsequent endorsement by the General Assembly, with great appreciation.

The themes of sustainable use of outer space and sustainable growth of the space sector, in particular the NewSpace economy, are the key priorities of the Finnish space policy. We consider that COPUOS is the right multilateral forum to address topics relevant to safe and sustainable space activities.

Addressing space debris is critically important to the long-term sustainability of space activities. The matter is of global concern and is to be tackled both at national and international level. We consider that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee is an indispensable forum for the exchange of views on scientific and technical aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation for the peaceful exploration and for the safe and sustainable, intergenerational use of outer space.

We are pleased that space debris mitigation is becoming a recurrent theme in national space laws, showing the willingness of States to adhere to the respective non-legally binding instruments and the principles contained therein. We however note that there is room for further improvement in increasing compliance with space debris mitigation guidelines, and further work is needed to ensure that sufficient normative frameworks can be identified and developed at international level for these purposes, including space debris remediation measures.

Finland has begun the process of evaluating its current level of implementation and identifying ways of furthering adherence with the LTS guidelines. With respect to part A of the LTS guidelines, Finland has a national regulatory framework in place and is committed to its continuous improvement.

According to the Act on Space Activities, which entered into force in 2018, avoidance of unnecessary environmental harm and mitigation of space debris, are set out as conditions for authorisation. This requirement is further complemented by a specific section on the topic. According to the Act, the operator shall, in accordance with recognised international guidelines, seek to ensure that the activities in outer space do not generate space debris.

We consider that alongside national implementation, international implementation of the voluntary instruments remains key for their success. Concerning international implementation, we wish to specifically mention the collaboration between UNOOSA and the European Space Agency (ESA) space debris infographics and podcasts on space debris in the social media. This collaboration including non-traditional means is very welcomed.

Additionally, we wish to mention that Finland organised together in January with Switzerland an online workshop dedicated to implementation of the 21 guidelines on the Long term Sustainability of outer space activities, aiming to provide an informal setting for European States to exchange their views and to share their experiences with respect to the implementation of the LTS Guidelines. We find that such exchanges could contribute to developing common understanding on ensuring sustainable future for space activities by all actors, at all levels.

Finally, Mr Chair,

In addition to practical implementation, we consider that it is important to engage in international discussion on policy and legal issues to support coherent development of the norms contained in the LTS guidelines through unified reporting practices on national implementation.

In the context of the LTS Working group, we are looking to participate actively in designing ways to improve normative development through reporting of national progress. We thank those delegations who have proposed methods and reported on their own national implementation, in this session and before.

This concludes our statement. Thank you Mr Chair and thank you distinguished Delegates for your time and attention.