

AUSTRALIA, Item 4

59th Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Agenda item 4 – General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities

Thank you Mr Chair, distinguished delegates.

It is a pleasure to be joining you all virtually, despite the continued difficult circumstances. In this regard, I commend the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, the Secretariat and staff for their continued support of the Committee and subcommittee.

Australia also appreciates the resilience and flexibility of Member States as we again come together in such circumstances to continue the important work of the Subcommittee.

Space, COVID-19 and Australia's economic recovery

Mr Chair,

Like many other Member States, Australia continues to address the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Space is a part of our economic recovery.

Following the Australian Government's announcement /in October 2020 that space would be one of six national manufacturing areas /to benefit from strategic government investment, 4 Australian space manufacturers /have been supported to date /to build manufacturing capabilities and networks, lift productivity, create jobs and build global competitiveness.

Australia envisages that the scientific and technical advancements /enabled under this *Modern Manufacturing Initiative*/ will support future space missions and contribute to the safety, stability and sustainability of outer space.

The Australian Government is continuing to consider opportunities /to collaborate with industry /and to make strategic investments and partnerships/ to boost Australia's manufacturing capabilities /and expertise in the space sector. This will complement the Australian Government's existing investments, including the *International Space Investment initiative*, *Space Infrastructure Fund*, and the *Moon to Mars Initiative*.

Australia's regulatory framework

Mr Chair,

The Australian Space Agency /is responsible for regulating activities that go beyond 100km above mean sea level, or involve high power rockets, as specified under the *Space (Launches and Returns) Act 2018* and associated Rules.

As per the *Australian Civil Space Strategy 2019-2028*, this legislation /forms the foundation of the Agency's efforts /to deliver outcomes under the 'Responsible' strategic space pillar – namely, the promotion of a space sector culture /that is globally respected, ensures national safety and security /under an appropriate regulatory framework, and meets international obligations and norms.

Since establishment of the Agency in 2018, the Agency has considered 4 complex applications, including Australian launch permits /and launch facility licences, and has considered 18 overseas payload permits /for assessment.

In 2021, the Agency performed functions /under the regulatory framework/ in relation to launch activities, including oversight of the first civil launch/ regulated by the Act and predecessor legislation/ in almost 20 years.

Effective frameworks, which allow for activities /in a safe environment, help provide certainty/ to the widening range of stakeholders /who are seeking to undertake, or develop new capabilities.

This is more important than ever, with the increasing accessibility of space/ presenting a pressing need/ to focus efforts on implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines).

Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and LTS 2.0 working group

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 LTS Guidelines /provide a framework/ that aims to ensure that current and emerging participants in space activities /act in a safe and sustainable manner, while enjoying the benefits of space.

Australia is working with industry/ to understand their awareness, perspectives and activities /related to implementation of the LTS Guidelines. Our engagement will inform our contribution/ to the Working Group on the LongTerm Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

Australia is pleased with the progress /made on the terms of reference, methods of work and the five-year workplan, and recognises the contributions of Member States /that have enabled us to reach this point. In particular, my delegation expresses its appreciation to the Chair, Mr Umamaheswaran of India, for his leadership /in seeking to build a path towards consensus.

Australia looks forward to contributing to these discussions further, and will continue to support the Chair's efforts /in guiding the Working Group towards the delivery of its desired outcome; that being the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Space and Global Health

Mr Chair,

The significance of the work /undertaken by the Working Group on Space and Global Health /has perhaps never been more evident/ than over the past 24 months, with the current pandemic /highlighting the role of innovative space technologies/ in mapping and informing public health responses. Australia looks forward to considering the draft report and draft resolution/ prepared by this Working Group, and thanks its members/ for their work.

Space weather

Australia also welcomes the opportunity /to consider the final report and recommendations /of the Expert Group on Space Weather. We recognise that the Group has streamlined and refined the recommendations/ initially presented at the 58th session of the Subcommittee, and believe that this presents a solid foundation /for discussions.

Increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation /to facilitate the global coordination of space weather activities /which address space weather needs – including capacity building – is critical/ if we are to ensure the safety and stability of space activities. Australia looks forward to ensuring that/ consideration of this important topic c/ontinues within the Committee. We

also commend the Expert Group on Space Weather /for its work over the past seven years.

Work of the Committee

Mr Chair,

International law and norms /provide a means /to address emerging challenges, including in outer space. Australia welcomes the recent establishment of the OpenEnded Working Group/ under the First Committee/ as *the* appropriate forum /for discussion of issues around reducing space threats /through rules, norms and principles of responsible behaviour.

COPUOS plays an important role /in facilitating the development of rules, norms and principles /for the exploration and peaceful uses of space, as well as facilitating a consensus-based approach /to addressing emerging challenges. In this regard, Australia continues to be strongly engaged with the work of the Committee.

Australia also welcomes the inclusion of the agenda item /on the ‘general exchange of views on dark and quiet skies /for science and society’. The rapid growth and evolution /of space activities, including the emergence of large satellite constellations, have the potential t/o create both economic and social opportunities, as well as unintended consequences.

It is important that /stakeholders across all sectors/ continue to engage in investigating practical solutions /to support the safety, stability and sustainability /of the outer space environment. Australia supports ongoing discussion /on the matter of dark and quiet skies, as it relates to the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

Conclusion

Mr Chair,

Australia is committed to its international obligations /and engagement with Member States through COPUOS.

We look forward to our discussions, and welcome the opportunity/ to contribute to the development and implementation of norms /in space and on Earth.

Thank you.