

 Permanent
Mission
of Austria

to the United
Nations in Vienna

AUSTRIA, ITEM 4

**General Exchange of Views
59th STSC (7 – 18 February 2022)
Ambassador Gabriela SELLNER**

Chair,

Austria supports the statement of the European Union. In addition, we would like to highlight the following issues.

We congratulate you, Your Excellency, Ambassador *Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay* on your election as Chair and Austria can assure you of our full support and cooperation. I also would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Ms. Natalia Archinard from Switzerland for having guided the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee so successfully.

Austria thanks Director Di Pippo for all she has done for UNOOSA, her extraordinary dedication and excellent leadership. We wish you well for your academic future.

We would like to welcome the new members to the **committee Angola, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Panama and Slovenia**. This brings the number of Member States to 100; we welcome this very positive development, which also underlines the growing importance of COPUOS and its work. **Therefore, Austria proposes that a reference to the valuable contribution of UNOOSA to the UN system be included into this year's ministerial declaration of the High Level Political Forum. We encourage you and the chair of COPUOS to prepare such a contribution and seek agreement of the member states.**

Chair,

the Space sector is growing and New Space brings in new commercial actors. However, new space is not only associated with opportunities but also with risks, in view of the increasing number of satellites in orbit.

There are around 5.000 satellites in the low earth orbit and one private actor in space activities operates around 2.000 satellites. In addition, several commercial and non-commercial actors establish and plan mega-constellations.

The risks are an increasing probability of collisions between satellites and a dramatic increase in space debris. Recent information about close encounters of spacecraft should make us aware that closer cooperation and a more precise space traffic management are necessary.

We need sustainable development in earth and in space. Austria has four operating nano-satellites in orbit and more will come. We therefore have a great interest in ensuring that these valuable satellites function safely and that space traffic management ensures sustainability in space.

Austria, therefore, welcomes the inclusion of "*Peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer Space*" in the Secretary General's report "***Our Common Agenda***". We understand that since February 2022, the President of the General Assembly has started a series of informal consultations with the member states of the General Assembly to decide which topics will be discussed at the planned *Summit of the Future* in September 2023.

Austria is convinced that space is an important topic for discussion at this Summit. Satellites and satellite-based data have become an integral part of our everyday life. The preservation of sustainable, safe and peaceful uses of outer space is therefore of utmost importance.

This year's **World Space Forum** (hopefully in person), which will take place in Vienna at the end of the year, will therefore focus on the preparation of the *Summit of the Future*. We hope that the informal consultations by the PGA will give clear guidance on both the topics to be tackled and the role of the different actors in preparing a good outcome.

Allow me to briefly comment on the ongoing work of the committee:

- We welcome the progress on ***Long-term Sustainability in Space – LTS 2.0***. The Working Group should agree on *its terms of reference, methods of work and work plan* during this session of the Subcommittee to be able to start substantive work and in depth discussions on the working areas agreed. We will make a statement under this item. In this context, Austria fully supports the European Union's participation in the work of the LTS-Working Group based on and fully in line with UN General Assembly Resolutions on the participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations and the consultations and working groups of COPUOS.
- We would like to thank the Experts from the ***Expert Group on Space Weather*** for submitting their final report. We support the Report and look forward to the swift implementation of its recommendations.
- Light pollution is a severe problem to science and society, therefore we welcome the Initiative ***„Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society“***.

Let me now inform you on events co-organized by Austria last year:

- From 7 to 9 September 2021 the ***United Nations/Austria Symposium on Space Applications for Food Systems*** took place as an online event and around 300 participants from more than 70 countries attended. The profound and result oriented discussions contributed to the *United Nations Food Systems Summit*. Following the Symposium, UNOOSA, ESA, NASA and ISRO [Indian Space Agency] jointly, organised training courses entitled "*Earth Observation Training for Agriculture*" in October 2021. These trainings attracted more than 1700 participants from more than 800 organisations in 125 countries. It was one of the largest training events conducted by space agencies to date. Austria would like to thank the participating agencies and UNOOSA and invite them to consider repeating such successful capacity-building activities in the coming years.
- The **3rd *World Space Forum focused on Space4Climate Action*** and took place as an online event from 6-9 December 2021. Around 600 participants discussed the topic from different perspectives: Users and providers of space technologies reported on their experiences and needs. Young people gave their perspective. Space agencies and companies showed successful projects. We thank UNOOSA and are grateful to all speakers, moderators and the engaged audience for making this event so successful.

In her opening remarks to the *World Space Forum 2021*, the Austrian Federal Minister Leonore Gewessler highlighted that "*Space resources are still underused. We need to link space and*

climate much more closely than before so that they can develop innovative solutions and tools together".

In this spirit, we will continue our work to further fine-tune the definition of concrete activities **to be implemented by UNOOSA** under the ***Space4Climate Action Initiative***. Therefore, the **UN/Austria Symposium** to be held in September 2022 will be dedicated to Space 4 Climate Action. We will carefully consider the recommendations from the *World Space Forum 2021* and - of course - take into account existing activities of UN agencies and international initiatives in support of SDG 13.

We thank the United Kingdom for supporting a Strategic Mapping Exercise through UNOOSA that will help to gain a better understanding of existing activities and efforts towards space and climate. This assessment will help to create synergies, promote coherence and avoid overlaps.

Let me draw your attention also on two technical presentations by Austrian experts:

- Prof. Otto Koudelka from the Graz University of Technology will provide first-hand information about "**PRETTY - A nanosatellite mission for altimetry and dosimetry**". This advanced small satellite will contribute to climate change research and will be launched at the end of 2022. The presentation will be held on Monday, 14 February 2022 in the afternoon, (under item 4 of the agenda).
- Prof. Wolfgang Wagner from the Technical University Vienna will talk about „**The new Copernicus Sentinel-1 Global Flood Monitoring service**". The presentation will be held on Thursday, 10 February 2022 in the morning, (under item 6 of the agenda).

In conclusion, I would like to repeat our proposal to prepare a member state-endorsed contribution to be included in the ministerial declaration of the forthcoming High Level Political Forum of ECOSOC in July 2022. We kindly ask that this proposal be reflected in the report.

Thank you!