

Canadian Statement

Agenda Item 4 – General Exchange of Views

Delivered by: Lisa Campbell, Head of Delegation, President of the Canadian Space Agency

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
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Note: The Statement will switch from French to English half way through

Monsieur le Président,

J'aimerais remercier M^{me} Natália Archinard pour son travail acharné au cours des deux dernières années et vous souhaiter la bienvenue, ambassadeur Facetti, à titre de président du Sous-comité scientifique et technique. Soyez assuré que vous recevrez le plein appui de la délégation canadienne tout au long de votre mandat. Nous aimerions également exprimer notre profonde gratitude au Bureau des affaires spatiales, à sa directrice Simonetta Di Pippo et à son équipe. Nous souhaitons particulièrement souligner l'incroyable travail réalisé par le Secrétariat, sous l'habile direction de M. Niklas Hedman, dans l'organisation et la gestion du Comité et du Sous-comité durant cette pandémie sans précédent. Grâce à vos efforts et à la souplesse de tous les membres du Comité, nous avons pu poursuivre nos importants travaux visant à garantir que l'exploration et l'utilisation de l'espace persistent pour profiter à l'humanité tout entière.

Monsieur le Président, éminents collègues,

Malgré la pandémie mondiale, les programmes spatiaux au Canada et à l'étranger ont continué à prospérer, et nous avons observé d'incroyables progrès, l'humanité s'aventurant encore plus loin dans l'espace. Il convient de souligner le lancement du télescope spatial James Webb en décembre, qui témoigne de notre soif de comprendre l'Univers. Le Canada est fier d'avoir fourni deux éléments à cet effort : le détecteur de guidage de précision, qui permettra au télescope de pointer avec précision, et l'imageur et spectrographe sans fente dans le proche infrarouge, qui servira à observer divers objets astronomiques, comme des exoplanètes, des naines brunes et des planètes vagabondes. Le télescope Webb permettra notamment aux scientifiques d'étudier les débuts de l'Univers et d'observer des étoiles lointaines, l'évolution des galaxies, l'atmosphère d'exoplanètes et plus encore. Quand le télescope Webb a atteint le point de Lagrange L2 le mois dernier, nous étions animés par le même enthousiasme que le monde entier, et nous attendons avec impatience les premières images.

Le Canada continue également d'appuyer l'important travail scientifique réalisé à bord de la Station spatiale internationale par l'entremise de diverses expériences en sciences de la santé et du système d'entretien mobile Canadarm2, qui fonctionne toujours de façon admirable bien qu'il ait été frappé par des débris l'an dernier. Il devient de toute évidence de plus en plus essentiel de gérer les débris, puisque nous continuons d'observer les effets de l'encombrement dans l'espace. Le Canada se réjouit à l'idée de reprendre les discussions avec le Comité des

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utilisations pacifiques de l'espace extra-atmosphérique en vue d'élaborer un cadre des pratiques exemplaires visant à réduire les débris et à assurer la durabilité à long terme des activités menées dans l'espace extra-atmosphérique.

Mr. Chair, distinguished colleagues,

Late last year, the world unfortunately witnessed the intentional and irresponsible destruction of a satellite in orbit, resulting in more than 1,500 trackable pieces of debris in low earth orbit; further threatening the safety of human spaceflight and the operation of space activities. In hopes of preventing this type of activity in the future, Canada welcomes the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour. Although the work undertaken by the OEWG complements the work of COPUOS, especially the work under the Long-term Sustainability of outer space activities, it is important that they remain separate so as to prevent COPUOS from getting bogged down in the disarmament discussions.

We welcome the tremendous progress made on the establishment of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of outer space activities under the leadership of Mr. Umamaheswaran R. It is our hope that we will begin the substantive work on sharing best practices from the implementation of the adopted guidelines; identifying possible new guidelines; and raising awareness and capacity building.

In support of this, Canada remains committed to conducting our space activities sustainably and in full compliance with the Outer Space Treaty. We are encouraged to see that more countries are recognizing the importance of the Artemis Accords in establishing an operational framework to ensure deep-space activities remain safe and sustainable. Since its signing, we have seen the number of countries joining the Artemis Accords increase from the original eight to fifteen. We are pleased that other nations recognize the Accords as an important first step to achieving safe and sustainable exploration, science, and commercial activities in deep space, including on the Moon and other celestial bodies. Recognizing the importance of considering all views on this topic, Canada concluded its national consultations on a framework for deep-space activities and is currently using that data to inform our efforts to develop and strengthen frameworks for space exploration activities.

Distinguished colleagues,

Canada acknowledges that the rapid growth and evolution of space activities has the potential to create socioeconomic opportunities, but also comes with unintended consequences. The emergence of large satellite constellations, for example, are impacting satellite operators, the scientific community, human spaceflight and ground-based astronomers. We note the conference room paper submitted by Chile, Slovakia, Spain, the International Astronomical

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Union, the European Southern Observatory and the Square Kilometer Array Observatory on the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies and look forward to discussing its context within this subcommittee. We welcome the inclusion of an agenda item on Dark and Quiet Skies for continuing this work.

Mr. Chair, distinguished colleagues,

We must not forget the continued importance of satellite Earth observation data for the benefit of all humankind. The UK-hosted COP26 showcased the importance of satellite Earth observation data in the fight against climate change. During COP26, Canada announced a 20 million dollar initiative that will allow a Canadian company, GHGSat, to contribute high resolution satellite data on methane emissions, along with archive datasets, to the UN's International Methane Emission Observatory. This data will be integrated with other publically available datasets to develop new derived products that will be openly available to researchers and decision-makers to support the Paris Agreement on climate change. 2021 has been another year of unprecedented natural disasters. And, as we celebrated the 20 year anniversary of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, we were reminded of the great importance the charter has played in supporting disaster response worldwide. We have provided further details on Canada's space program in our national report contained in CRP 7.

A final thought, on behalf of the Canadian delegation I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Dr. Simonetta Di Pippo on the announcement of her retirement. The impact of her 8 years of tireless and dedicated service to the international space community will resonate for decades.

We look forward to a productive session and appreciate your kind attention.