

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of the Czech Republic, allow me to congratulate you for your election as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and wish you success in this position.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the chair of the previous two sessions Ms. Natália Archinard, as well as to the UNOOSA Director Ms. Simonetta Di Pippo and her whole team, for their excellent and professional work in the preparation and conduct of the subcommittee meetings in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

2021 was an extraordinary year for outer space activities globally, with record amounts of launches and new space objects, as well as important milestones for space science, exploration and human spaceflight. As outer space is becoming more accessible and widely used, we wish to reiterate the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in order to minimize the risks of harmful impacts of increased activity in outer space and maximise the benefits of space for all humankind. We believe that COPUOS is a unique and appropriate forum for global discussions and efforts towards these goals.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Main interests of our national space activities lie in a fields of Earth Observation, Navigation, Telecommunications, Launchers, Space Science and Exploration and Space Safety. The Czech government's financial contributions to space activities exceeded 55 million EUR per year. Our memberships in European Space Agency and European Union remain the main pillars of development of our space activities and participation in space projects. In addition, the Czech Republic also became a host country of the EU Agency for the Space programme (EUSPA) in mid 2021.

The Czech Republic also fosters bilateral relations with countries around the world and remains committed to international cooperation in outer space at all levels.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, allow me to briefly address the STSC agenda items, especially those that overlap with a very timely topic of Space Safety:

The Czech industry and scientific institutions are actively involved in the observation and development of technologies for monitoring of Space debris, Space weather and Near-Earth objects. Under the framework of ESA programmes, our industry and academia actively contribute to related space missions such as planetary defence mission HERA, space debris removal mission Clearspace-1 or dedicated Space Weather monitoring mission to Lagrange Point-5. We are involved in development of ESA's Collision risk Estimation and Automated Mitigation system and moreover, we are also going to

integrate our national SST capabilities into EU SST Framework in order to strengthen European capabilities in space debris monitoring and in provision of related satellite protection services.

Our delegation also considers it necessary to discuss further and in greater depth challenging Space Traffic management agenda, that will soon represent a key and basis element for ensuring safe and sustainable use of orbital regimes. Closer cooperation between STSC and LSC is essential to find consensus on globally acceptable STM governance.

With regard to the long term sustainability of outer space activities, we have noted with satisfaction the progress made in the preparation of work of the new LTS Working group, we are supporting the process of implementation of existing LTS guidelines at national, ESA and EU level and we are preparing new national space legislation that will be positively influenced by the LTS principles.

The Czech Republic also wants to support proposal of 7th Planetary Defence Conference designating year 2029 as the International Year of Planetary Defence - at that time the results of ESA HERA and NASA DART missions will already be known, and at the same time asteroid Apophis will pass by the Earth - this conjunction will help us to bring more political and public support to the field of planetary defence.

The Czech Republic appreciates work of the Working Group NPS and would like to take this opportunity to support joint ESA and UK proposal on "Reflections on further steps to enhance the safety of nuclear power source applications in outer space (A/AC.105/C.1/L.395). The proposal foresees extension of mandate of the working group, is meaningful, adequate and therefore very relevant in view of commercialisation of space activities.

We also welcome inclusion of "General exchange of views on dark and quiet skies for science and society" in the STSC agenda and we will address this topic through a separate statement.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Despite great global progress and achievements in the above areas, we have seen some very irresponsible actions in recent years that have negatively affected space environment. We therefore call on COPUOS Member States to avoid repeating actions and behaviours that would, in particular, create a high volume of space debris that poses significant risks to current and future outer space activities.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

I'm pleased to announce that under framework on the National Space Plan, the Czech space sector continues its work on feasibility study of new national space mission „SLAVIA“ (Space Laboratory for Advanced Variable Instruments and Applications), with its main goal to lay one of the cornerstone for

future asteroid mining. Mission will be composed of two 20kg satellites carrying various instruments designed mainly for characterisation of chemical composition of asteroid fragments entering the Earth's atmosphere.

We would also like to invite all delegations interested in peaceful use of lasers in space to visit webpage lasers4space.com, where the delegations can find respective information and news on the international non-governmental scientist-led initiative addressing technological, governance and political aspects and benefits of use of laser in space in the area of space debris mitigation, space traffic management, asteroid prospection and other related aspects.

I'm also glad to announce that VZLUSAT-2, technological 3U cubesat satellite, was successfully launched to the Earth's orbit last month. VZLUSAT-2, designed by national Aerospace Research and Test Institute in collaboration with private partners, will be used for technological demonstration and scientific, X-ray and radiation research. Registration of the satellite is currently on-going.

Mr. Chair,

In concluding, let me assure you that the Czech Republic remains committed to international cooperation in outer space at all levels and would like to reiterate its strong support for the work and the mission of the UN COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, I thank you for your kind attention.