

Statement Netherlands

Agenda item 4 – General Exchange of Views

Delivered by: Mr. J.G. Kroon, Radiocommunications Agency Netherlands

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Fifty-ninth session, Vienna, 7–18 February 2022

- Dear Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the floor. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few developments in the Netherlands, to reaffirm our priorities, and to look ahead.
- Whether on earth or in outer space, the Netherlands is committed to the international rule of law. Hence, the Netherlands is signatory to all five core United Nations Treaties related to outer space. Accordingly, the Netherlands has established the Dutch Space Act.
- The number of space activities in the Netherlands is growing structurally, resulting in an increase in the number of Dutch space operators and satellites under Dutch jurisdiction and control. Last year there were five licensees under the Dutch Space Act which operated 19 Dutch satellites: 9 Geostationary satellites and 10 Low Earth Orbit satellites. Based on several recent developments we believe the number of satellites under Dutch jurisdiction will increase significantly over the coming years.
- In light of this, the Netherlands is particularly committed to a safe, secure and sustainable outer space environment. Therefore, the Netherlands is conducting an analysis of how the 21 LTS guidelines match up with our existing regulations and how our current Space Act could be adapted accordingly.

Mr. Chairman,

- Prognoses regarding the continuing increase of space debris are alarming. To secure sustainable use of outer space for current and future generations, adopting the measures included in the Space Debris Compendium is important. In the light of this, the Netherlands supports the development of an international worldwide regime for the mitigation of space debris. This regime should not only include measures that prevent the increase of space debris, but also include measures with a view to reducing the current amount of space debris already in outer space.
- Moreover, as outer space becomes increasingly more congested, there is a need for reliable and sustainable space traffic management. Our economies, societies and security are more dependent on space infrastructure than ever before. And yet, our current regime of space traffic management is insufficient and unsustainable. The Netherlands is convinced the international community must strive towards a legally binding instrument for space traffic management, negotiated here, within the framework of the UN. We need governance that enables safe and sustainable space-travel, while providing a global level playing field. Moreover, in developing strategies and adequate regulatory frameworks, we need to include private and public stakeholders. Not only because the space sector is a global market, but because technologies advance rapidly, implicating that we should adopt a technology-open approach as much as possible.
- A constructive dialogue on Space Traffic Management has already taken place on a European level, between ESA, the European Commission and member states. And as the outcomes of this dialogue state: continued engagement with international organizations such as COPUOS will be key. The Netherlands would therefore welcome further discussions on Space Traffic Management within this forum.
- The ongoing deployment of thousands of satellites in the Low Earth Orbit does not only affect in-orbit operations. These satellite constellations have major influence on the visibility of the night skies for ground-based astronomy and regarding the

availability of frequency spectrum in Low earth orbits. Unfortunately, these adverse effects have so far not been adequately considered. This calls for an internationally agreed regulation, and in our view, this matter falls within the core remit of the UN COPUOS and the ITU. The Netherlands Delegation therefore considers that the concerns raised under "Dark and Quiet Skies", presented by the International Astronomical Union, are very relevant and require attention at international level.

Mr. Chairman,

- The Netherlands supports the use of satellite data for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Netherlands funded the Geodata for Agriculture and Water Facility with € 60 mln, which aims to support 4,5 million smallholder food producers with satellite based information services by 2023.
- Last year we have also released a grant with the topic: satellite data on behalf of climate mitigation and adaptation. The goal is to support the development of satellite based services that have a direct impact on the Netherlands and help to achieve the 1,5 degree target of the Paris climate accord. Six organizations have been granted for the feasibility phase and the innovations range from measuring and monitoring of carbon stock in soil, for the use of satellite based soil moisture information for water management, and to the use of agro forestry for increasing carbon storage.
- Whether on earth or in outer space, there is a need for sustainable governance of resources. As to the working group on Space Resources, the Netherlands welcomes the establishment of this working group. The Netherlands would like to take this opportunity to recall the Building Blocks of the The Hague International Space Resources Governance Working Group, as submitted to the Committee by the Governments of Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Moreover, the Netherlands attaches great importance to the independent input of all stakeholders involved in Space Resources Activities. With that, Mr. Chairman, the Netherlands looks forward to a constructive session.
- As space is now an indispensable part in our daily lives and central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community needs clear rules and a forum where dialogue is possible to develop a global consensus. We believe COPUOS and UNOOSA should continue to play an important role in this context and the Netherlands will continue to support the activities in this arena.

Thank you for your attention.