

WORLD SPACE WEEK ASSOCIATION
Agenda Item no. 4
Presented by: Maruška Strah, Executive Director



Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We want to thank Ms. Di Pippo and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for their guidance and support in the organization of this meeting. We are grateful that we can gather with all of you and contribute to the discussion. We remain hopeful that we will soon be able to meet in person. We would also like to congratulate the Committee for its incredible achievement of expanding to a 100 member states. We wish all newly joined member states a great success.

It is my great honor to speak to you on behalf of the World Space Week Association. The support of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and Member States, has been of great importance for a successful celebration of the annual World Space Week, declared by the UN General Assembly in 1999, to be every year from 4th to 10th of October.

2021 was an exciting year for the Association. It is my great pleasure to report that we recorded 6, 418 events held in 96 countries. I note with great pleasure that the number of countries celebrating World Space Week has risen from 86 in 2019 to 91 in 2020 and 96 in 2021.

We remained cautious of the global situation and encouraged the organization of events in accordance with the safety guidelines of national health authorities.

Our 2021 Activities

For 2021, the World Space Week theme was “Women in Space”, celebrating the many achievements and contributions of women to space sciences and technology.

Since the earliest astronomical observations, women have played a key role in the understanding of space and the Universe around us. However, global studies indicate that only 20% of the collective workforce for space exploration related industries are female. Our goal was to highlight strong female role models. We are incredibly grateful to our World Space Week 2021 Honorary Chair Ms. Lisa Callahan, Lockheed Martin VP, for her support not only of the Association, but of women who wish to pursue careers in the space industry.

For the six months leading up to World Space Week, we conducted a social media campaign dedicated to Notable Women. We shared hidden stories about women in space exploration, building awareness about women’s achievements and contributions in the space industry. The

webinars we organized gave us a chance to address difficult topics that women face when entering the space industry, and reflect on the challenges and hurdles unique for women.

Hundreds of millions of people engaged with World Space Week 2021. We recorded 770 million individual impressions on Twitter. This number speaks volumes about the incredible outreach, and leverage, a coordinated event such as World Space Week has on public opinion and engagement.

We were glad to see that many of these events were organized in person as well as virtually, which shows new possibilities for organization of World Space Week events.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the country with the highest number of events in 2021 - Pakistan. SUPARCO's dedication to World Space Week and participants of the organized events is remarkable. I would like to congratulate them for the 2,687 organized events.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the other countries with the highest-ranking number of events - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ireland, Iran and Brazil. The Association is grateful for all the support countries are showing to the celebration of World Space Week, as well as to all participants of the largest celebration of space on Earth. I would also like to recognize the incredible work of World Space Week participants in Afghanistan. In light of many difficulties they

faced, they remained committed to educating girls and women in astronomy and despite being in danger for the work they were doing, still continued their great cause of educating women and girls.

Without Member States, space agencies, national organizations and participants, World Space Week could never be so successful. I wish to recognize some of our supporters, who have been showing continued support not only of the World Space Week, but also of this important theme, Women in Space - NASA, the Philippines Space Agency, UK Space Agency, Kenyan Space Agency and the Australian Space Agency. We would also like to thank the STEM Education and Outreach unit of the European Space Agency and the Education Department of the International Space Station US National Laboratory Office.

I wish to acknowledge all the work that the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs did in their Space4Women mentor network, which I am personally proud to be a part of. Mentoring and empowering the next generation is of utmost importance in our Association, and it was my privilege to mentor several mentees from over the world. Our goal this year was to showcase role models to the next generation of girls and encourage them to pursue their studies in the STEM fields and we believe that we achieved a small step in that direction, by giving participants of World Space Week a chance to connect to female role models, by participating in our programs leading to World Space Week 2021.

The 2022 World Space Week Theme: Space And Sustainability

So where to next? We will remain committed to supporting women in the space sector. Having said that, we launched our Space and Sustainability social media campaign on 11 February, on the International Day of Girls and Women in Science.

Our goal in 2022 will be to address the theme “Space and Sustainability” from two angles. On one hand, we want to bring more awareness to the importance of sustainability of space activities. On the other, we want to address how space technologies and applications help achieve a safer, cleaner and fairer planet Earth. We want to acknowledge how, among other space activities, space exploration and Earth Observation help drive change, especially in developing countries. This includes identifying pollution of land and sea, supporting agriculture, tackling climate change and many other benefits of Earth observation.

We are very excited about the 2022 theme, which embodies the values of the World Space Week Association and our own commitment to Sustainable Development Goals. Our hope is that all of

you will join us in the celebration of World Space Week 2022 and use this opportunity to further spread awareness about the link between space and sustainability.

In 2021, the Association launched new special programs, which we will continue in 2022. With our webinar series, we will show our dedication to many topics related to “Space and Sustainability”.

The World Space Week Association Annual Report 2021

We have recently published our Annual Report 2021, describing all our activities and achievements, as well as highlights of World Space Week 2021. I would like to invite you to visit our website and take a closer look at the Report, which will give those interested a better understanding of our work and will hopefully encourage closer collaboration among us.

Link to the Annual Report: <https://www.worldspaceweek.org/organization/annual-reports/>

It is with great pride that I can say that World Space Week Association strives to bring space and space related activities closer to people. We might not take positions on policy - but we remain committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of their gender, age, nationality or religious beliefs have the opportunity to participate in the largest celebration of space in the world.

I would like to invite all Member States to take on an active role in supporting World Space Week, so that together we can continue to showcase the incredible achievements of the space community every year, 4 to 10 of October. We are convinced that there is benefit for all nations, governments, space agencies and other organizations in engaging with World Space Week. We are very interested in entering dialogue with you individually on how we can collaborate closer together and bring more attention to your programs.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, and distinguished delegates, for your attention. I am looking forward to a great year, and I am hoping that you will celebrate World Space Week 2022 with us, under the theme "Space and Sustainability".