

**Statement by U.S. Ambassador Laura S.H. Holgate,
on Agenda Item 3, “General Exchange of Views,” February 7, 2023**

Thank you, Chair. The U.S. delegation appreciates your steady leadership. We also thank the acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and his dedicated team, as well as the acting Secretary of the Subcommittee. As we look forward to the selection of the Office’s new Director, we remain ever appreciative of the work and dedication of its professional staff.

Chair, our thoughts are with those affected by the devastating earthquake yesterday. The United States stands ready to provide any and all needed assistance both directly and through international cooperative endeavors, like the recent activation of the International Charter for Space and Major Disasters which enables the rapid coordination and sharing of expertise and satellite imagery to aid in rescue and recovery efforts.

Chair, the past year was one for the record books in America’s space program. NASA launched its Space Launch System for the first time, sending the uncrewed Orion spacecraft around the Moon; kicked off a new era in astronomy with the James Webb Space Telescope’s new imagery from the cosmos; continued to collaborate with partners on regular missions to the International Space Station; and moved an asteroid in humanity’s first-ever planetary defense demonstration.

As the U.S. government celebrates 2023 as the “Year of Open Science,” we reflect on the many ways we have delivered on NASA’s commitment to explore the secrets of the universe for the benefit of all. The United States makes available its Earth observations freely and openly, enabling all nations to understand our home planet more fully, improve lives, and safeguard our future. NASA’s planned Earth Information Center will further the availability of this data to respond to climate change. To that end, NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Geological Survey worked with international partners to collaborate on global responses to climate change at the 27th UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt last November.

NASA’s successful launch of the Orion spacecraft – on a path that traveled further than any other spacecraft ever built for human spaceflight – marked a

critical milestone in the Artemis Program. Through Artemis, the agency plans to send the first woman and first person of color to the Moon. NASA is working with commercial and international partners to establish the Gateway, which will serve as a multi-purpose outpost orbiting the Moon. In November, Japan announced further contributions to the Gateway while NASA and the South African National Space Agency renewed their partnership in lunar exploration with the groundbreaking of a new communications site that will support Artemis. Bahrain, Colombia, France, Nigeria, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore have all signed the Artemis Accords since this subcommittee last met, bringing the number of signatories to 23.

Last year marked 50 years of continuous Landsat observations of the Earth's surface, allowing us to track the impacts of climate change around the world. NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey have announced that a follow-on mission, Landsat Next, has been approved to move into formulation with a three-satellite architecture that will provide improved spectral, spatial, and temporal resolution.

We also took a great leap forward last year last year in our understanding of the universe. The James Webb Space Telescope – a joint effort with the European Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency – will explore every phase of cosmic history, from within our solar system to the most distant observable galaxies in the early universe.

Chair, the United States looks forward to ongoing work with COPUOS Members to implement the guidelines on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and productively engage in the LTS 2.0 Working Group.

The United States would like to thank the many Member States here that helped pass UN General Assembly Resolution 77/41, calling on all States to commit not to conduct destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile tests. We note that this commitment is not solely a security issue, but also directly supports the long-term sustainability of the outer space environment and enables the ongoing peaceful use of outer space. We call upon all COPUOS Member States to consider making this commitment in order to demonstrate this emerging norm of responsible behavior.

In the past year, advances in outer space have reflected the best of human innovation and international cooperation, but they also have provided transparency into the worst of human brutality. Satellite imagery has enabled real-time monitoring of war crimes and a greater universal understanding of the horrors of Russia's illegal and unprovoked war on Ukraine. In light of Russia's ongoing aggression – a clear violation of international law – we insist that any affiliation between the United Nations and the proposed regional center for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation would be wholly inappropriate.

We thank the Members and observers of this subcommittee, and we look forward to continuing our work to explore and use space to improve life for everyone.

Thank you, Chair.