

Canadian Statement
Agenda Item 12 – Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities
Delivered by: Sarah Pacey-Parker, Canadian Space Agency

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Sixtieth session, Vienna, February 6-17, 2023

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Canada remains committed to the development and implementation of rules, norms and best practices that enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Indeed, Canada continues its internal assessment of Canada's compliance to the 21 Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in order to identify gaps and areas for review to further strengthen our commitment to the safety and sustainability of outer space and continues to take practical measures to implement the guidelines nationally.

Canada would like to thank the Chair of the Working Group Mr. Umamaheswaran and the Secretariat, for their efforts to advance the next tranche of this important work. We were pleased to participate in the informal intercessional session in November to advance the work of the working group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We remain committed to supporting this important undertaking. In particular, we believe it is important to continue to place equal emphasis on the three objectives of: sharing best practices and lessons learned; raising awareness and capacity building; and studying and considering possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We encourage all member states to submit information regarding their implementation of the guidelines and lessons learned and best practices to not only enhance communication and international cooperation, but also to promote capacity-building.

Mr. Chair,

Canada was proud to be an active participant in the decade-long effort to establish the existing 21 guidelines and looks forward to actively contributing to the discussion over the course of the working group. We would encourage all delegations to support discussion on best practices and lessons learned in regards to implementation of the guidelines by submitting information on national implementation efforts to the Chair of the Working Group. In addition, we would

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encourage the use of a common format or template for these submissions in order to support the analytical work of the Secretariat. We feel that in sharing experiences with implementation we will make significant progress on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as many of us will undoubtedly share similar challenges and can learn from one another.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We welcome the non-paper from the Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities put forward following the November intercessional meeting. We wish to thank the Chair for his efforts to advance the development of a Workshop to take place in 2024 during the sixty-first session of the STSC, within existing resources. We take note of the proposed topics for the workshop and wish to express our ongoing support for this effort. In particular, we wish to highlight our preference to hold this event during the plenary session to maximize participation, including that of international intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and academia.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Canada believes that space debris is one of the most significant challenges to the long-term sustainability of outer space. Efforts to mitigate debris and reduce the likelihood of accidental collisions should be built on going forward. I wish to bring your attention to the Conference Room Paper that Canada submitted concerning possible areas for new guidelines based on our experience with implementation thus far. We believe that future discussions at the working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities could consider potential future guidelines on post-mission disposal and active debris removal.

In addition, we should also consider the potential need for guidelines to shape deep-space activities to ensure that these activities are carried out in a sustainable manner and for the benefit of all. For example, the likelihood of increased activity at the south pole of the lunar

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surface suggests the utility of a discussion on the potential need for safety zones to deconflict activities.

While Canada has proposed these areas for possible new guidelines we wish to conclude by emphasizing that much work remains to advance implementation of the existing 21 Guidelines. We believe that it is important to place equal weight on all three elements of the work plan and we encourage all members to actively participate in these dynamic and constructive discussions.

Thank you for your kind attention.