

FOR ALL MOONKIND, AGENDA ITEM 3

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For All Moonkind
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Of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
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Thank you, Chair. Distinguished delegates and representatives, it is as ever a great honor and privilege for me to submit this statement on behalf of For All Moonkind. I would first like to convey from all of us at For All Moonkind, our deepest condolences to the people of Turkey and Syria. Natural disasters remind us all of the frailty of humanity and of our Earth and reinforce the importance of the international community coming together in meetings like this to work together for a better future. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretariat and the entire staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs for their incredible work in organizing and managing these meetings. We are grateful for all the kind assistance and guidance we have been provided.

Distinguished delegates, For All Moonkind is an entirely volunteer international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. Our volunteers include more than 100 space law, heritage law and policy experts from every inhabited continent. We are the only organization in the world committed to preserving human heritage in outer space. Our mission is to assure that historic lunar landing sites – like, for example, the site where Luna 2 impacted in 1959, the site where Apollo 11 landed in 1969, and the site of Chang’e 4, which marks the first ever robotic mission to the far side of the Moon – and similar sites and objects in outer space are recognized for their outstanding value to humanity and consequently preserved and protected for posterity as part of our common human heritage.

Distinguished delegates, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has entered its most significant era since its establishment by the United Nations General

Assembly in 1958. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 established a sustainable legal framework for space activities that has served humanity well as it tentatively explored the space surrounding our Earth. But as humanity continues to advance beyond our Earth, crowding our orbits, and seeking to explore and use space resources, we need more.

New principles must be adopted to assure success and sustainability, and, importantly, to avoid conflict and harmful interference. This is not a challenge for the COPUOS. This is the obligation of the COPUOS. We applaud this Committee for all of its incredible work including the work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We support the Conference Room Paper submitted by Canada, [document A/AC.105/C.1/2023/CRP.17] which asks this Committee to consider extending the consideration of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities to activities in deep space including discussion on preserving space heritage.

Distinguished delegates, in 1958, at the 992nd Meeting of the 1st Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, the delegate from El Salvadore, Mr. Vega Gomez, reflected upon the expansion of humanity into space. Though at the time the development of space capabilities seemed unique to only two States, the United States and the Soviet Union, Mr. Gomez recognized that the technological triumphs of reaching space were “not the triumph of a handful of quiet” individuals, but “the result of culture accumulated through centuries, with the contributions brought by the sufferings of [humans]; it is the triumph of [human] intellect – the human that is part of us all.”

It is inarguable that recognizing and protecting human heritage builds kinship among all people. This is well-recognized with respect to human cultural heritage artifacts and sites here on Earth. Indeed, the World Heritage Convention, ratified by more than 190 States, embodies the truism that the deterioration or disappearance of any item of cultural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world. Humanity

has a common responsibility to the past – to protect it so that we may move forward to the future in unity. Preservation is not antithetical to progress. It is a sign of progress.

Heritage is more than just monuments. Heritage, cultural and natural, tangible and intangible, is an evolving resource that supports identity, memory and sense of place and has a crucial role in achieving sustainable development. It enables social cohesion and strengthens social well-being. Heritage is a fragile, non-renewable resource that must be conserved for current and future generations. And it is incontrovertible that at this point in time, it is the historic sites, our heritage, in space that are most vulnerable to damage and in the most need of protection.

Distinguished delegates, for all these reasons we urge this Subcommittee to commence the process to formally consider the adoption of measures to recognize the existence of human cultural heritage in space. In protecting cultural heritage we assure our sustainability and allow ourselves to be drawn together in kinship rather than drawn apart by barriers.

Distinguished delegates, you can make this happen.

I thank you for your kind attention.

[FOR THE WRITTEN SUBMISSION ONLY]

If you would like to learn more about For All Moonkind, or if you are interested in participating in our future forums, please visit www.forallmoonkind.org and/or email info@forallmoonkind.org.