

**THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
JAURÈSGASSE 3, 1030 VIENNA**

Statement

By the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

at

**The Sixty Session of the SCIENTIFIC and TECHNICAL
Subcommittee of COPUOS**

Agenda item 3: General Exchange of Views

6-17 February 2023 Vienna, Austria

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, the Iranian delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you on assuming the Chairmanship of STSC and assures you of our full support and cooperation in conducting this session. We appreciate UNOOSA and its acting director Mr. Nicolas Headman for continued efforts in enabling efficient functioning of COPUOS and its sub-committees despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its commitment to the peaceful use and exploration of outer space and re-emphasizes on the following principles: universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development, the non-appropriation of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies by claim of sovereignty, use, occupation or any other means; responsibility of States for their national space activities carried out by both governmental and non-governmental entities; the non-militarization of outer space; the prevention of the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space; the strict use of outer space, as the common heritage of humankind for peaceful purposes; and international cooperation in the development of space activities, in particular those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to highlight some points regarding Iran's space affairs. The first one is Iran's indigenous advancement and progress in the field of space capabilities. We are building up on our previous assets and capacities, planning for a sustainable utilization of space and getting benefited from space to accomplish on the ground welfare. Launching a remote sensing satellite (Noor 2) into orbit of 500 kilometers using a three-stage Satellite Launch Vehicle (Qased) on March 8, 2022 is an instance.

Furthermore, In August 2022 with the full support and cooperation of ROSCOSMOS, "Khayyam" Satellite was successfully launched into the orbit. The control and operation of "Khayyam", which was developed in a jointly cooperation with Russian Federation, is carried out by Iranian experts based in ground stations related to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) and in the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Khayyam" satellite-based data will be used for peaceful purposes, including agricultural land monitoring, water resources management, natural disaster management, mining exploration, natural resources and country's borders monitoring and last not the least territorial planning. In December 2022, "Khayyam" satellite registered on UNOOSA website and the UN Secretary-General was addressed in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 1721 B(XVI), dated, 20 December 1961.

Mr. Chairman,

Another issue that we would like to address in this august body is the illegal operation of the broadband satellite Internet service known as Starlink within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran by a mega-constellation operator (SPACEX) with the US government support.

Starlink receivers have begun to be smuggled into Iran, in hopes of providing a backup Internet.

Based on the Treaty on “Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies” envisaged in its Article VI: “States Parties to the Treaty shall bear international responsibility for national activities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies or by non-governmental entities, and for assuring that national activities are carried out in conformity with the provisions set forth in the present Treaty. The activities of non- governmental entities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall require authorization and continuing supervision by the appropriate State Party to the Treaty.”

In spite of our government’s formal objection addressed to UNOOSA, ITU, United Nation Security Council via formal Verbal-Note, as well as Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and one constellation company which provides satellite internet, no response is yet received.

Furthermore, “Regulation Governing Landing Rights Regarding Provisions of Satellite Services in the Islamic Republic of Iran” which is available on the website of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and operators were formally informed of. Any communication satellite constellation provides broadband Internet, must respect local landing rights as countries have sovereignty claims over spectrum allocation related to broadcast in their territory.

Such irresponsible illegal act is not only considered as intervening in the internal affairs of Iran in accordance with Article 2, Para 7 of the UN Charter, which has to be observed by all UN Member States, but also is flagrant violation of the international law, in particular the inviolability of the “sovereign equality” of all UN members in accordance to the UN Charter. Consequently, the Islamic Republic of Iran holds the US government responsible for such unlawful operation by its SpaceX private company.

It is well-known now that, Starlink is not merely a civilian project and has military objectives as an element for militarization and invigoration of an arms race in outer space to threat national security of States. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its inherent right to respond, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations to any threat posed, or wrongful act against its national sovereignty and its territorial integrity. The conduct and action of constellation companies in Iran’s territory without authorization is a blatant breach of sovereignty which include refrain from complying with the OST1967 as well as Iran’s Landing Right

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that earth orbits are valuable resources and heritage for global community and their capacity is a limited natural resource, especially at the low Earth Orbits (LEOs). Recently these resources are utilized for mega-constellations such as “Starlink” (which is supposed to deploy more than 42000 satellite into orbits by Space-X company), proceeding these activities, will push the capacity of LEO orbit toward saturation of the LEO and will benefit exclusive State, thereby absolutely threatening poses to the sustainability of space activities.

Thereupon, mega-constellation's plan and so their exploitation should be rationalized, and should be made available to all States, based on equitable access principle. Therefore, implementation of mega-constellations should be regulated under a special legal framework and must be limited in amount of satellites in orbits. In such regime, first of all we would be able to protect the allocation of orbital slots for developing countries in the LEO, and secondly the equitable access to orbital slot for all States would be guaranteed.

Mr. Chairman,

Due to such challenges and other problems that the operation of mega-constellations in LEO poses to peaceful use of outer space, COPUOS should consider such problems as a high priority, through a mechanism, to redress the situation.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.