

Sweden, Item 3 (General Exchange of Views)

COPUOS STSC, 6-17 February 2023

Mr Chair,

Please allow me to welcome you as Chair of this COPUOS STSC session and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Acting Director Niklas Hedman and the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs for the excellent preparation of this session.

Sweden aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. Please, allow me to add the following in a national capacity.

COPUOS and its Subcommittees are unique platforms for international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, including the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence building measures regulating space activities. COPUOS's important role for the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space is also mentioned in "Our Common Agenda", the UN Secretary General's report from September 2021, which we very much welcome and would like to see translated into action during the years to come.

This year's session takes place in a very difficult time with an ongoing war in Europe. The illegal crime of aggression by the Russian Federation and the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory, is a flagrant violation of the UN charter and international law. We urge the Russian Federation to cease its illegal military aggression and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders.

Chair,

Sweden is a firm believer in multilateralism. Our national space strategy underlines the importance of international cooperation and defines space as a global common. Sweden remains committed to promoting the

preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.

Sweden has been an actor in space for more than 50 years. We have an advanced space industry, cutting-edge research and the space centre, Esrange, with more than 600 successful launches of sounding rockets, in northern Sweden. The government is continuing to invest in the space sector. A few weeks ago, a new launch pad was inaugurated at the Esrange Space Center, providing Sweden and Europe with capacity to launch small satellites into orbit. Since 2020, the Esrange has also developed and tested rocket engines and reusable space technology.

Mr Chair,

In order to continue to reap the benefits from space, ensuring the long-term sustainability of space activities is of course a prerequisite. Our increasing use and reliance on space poses new challenges for the future, and COPUOS has a crucial role in tackling these.

Sweden fully supports the continued work of the Working Group on the long-term sustainability of outer space, LTS, and we want to emphasize the important task that rests on member states to continue the implementation of the adopted guidelines. We recognize the positive effects that come from such national implementation, not only on the safety and sustainability of the outer space environment, but also the positive impact it has on space security. Our own national implementation of the guidelines is underway, and we appreciate the opportunities to learn from other countries' experience.

The LTS guidelines enshrine many transparency and confidence building measures available to member states. Sharing information on national space policy, strategy and legislation and its implementation facilitates a greater shared understanding of intentions and activities in space and the development of the global space sector. Thus, it decreases risks of

misunderstandings and miscalculations that may lead to uncontrolled escalation of conflicts or transfer conflicts on earth into the space domain.

Concluding on the topic of long-term sustainability, I would also like to inform this Subcommittee that the fair and sustainable use of space is an overarching priority for the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union during this spring.

Finally, as regards the topic of Dark and Quiet Skies, and the problem of light pollution for science and society, Sweden welcomes the initiatives and discussions in this Committee so far. We see the need for continued deliberations and support the proposal to maintain this topic as a single agenda item for next year's STSC meeting and to create an expert group for a more detailed monitoring and analysis.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, Sweden will continue to actively engage in multilateral cooperation on space issues, in COPUOS and elsewhere. We will continue to promote the sustainable, safe, secure and responsible use of outer space for peaceful purposes. We remain committed to work to prevent an arms race in outer space and to ensure that outer space does not become an arena for conflict. We will support efforts to enhance transparency and openness of the space environment and the sharing of information from space applications.

We look forward to working together with all delegations to ensure a fruitful session.

I thank you.