



Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Vienna

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## **Statement by the Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

### **The Sixty-First Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS**

#### **Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views**

29 January 2024 - Vienna, Austria

*In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

**Mr. Chairman,**

|Let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption as the chair of this important committee. We are confident under your leadership, this Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) would succeed to fulfill its mandate.

Furthermore, we would like to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini who will be assuming the role of the Director of the UNOOSA. We are confident that her expertise and leadership will further enhance the work of the Secretariat and contribute to the success of future endeavors. My delegation also would like to appreciate the Secretariat for preparation and organizing this session.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's unwavering commitment to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international legal framework for outer space activities is affirmed in numerous occasions. Our dedication to peaceful exploration and use of outer space remains strong. We believe that these activities should benefit all countries, regardless of their economic or scientific advancement, and should be accessible to all. Our approach is rooted in the principle of universal and equal access to outer space.

Iran has embarked on a strategic journey to enhance its domestic capabilities for the sustainable utilization of space, in line with this commitment. We take immense pride in our recent achievements, including the successful launch of our domestically developed “Noor 3” remote sensing satellite. Additionally, our groundbreaking test flight of a bio-space capsule,

reaching a sub-orbital altitude of approximately 130 kilometers, marks a significant milestone in our pursuit of human spaceflight which has been achieved despite illegal unilateral sanctions maintained an/or imposed. In our recent achievement, on January 20th, a research satellite named "Suraya", weighing 50 kilograms, was launched into a 750-kilometer orbit using the Iranian Qaem 100 SLV.

The *Khayyam* satellite, an Iranian remote sensing satellite, is currently providing its services. It offers invaluable contributions to various services such as disaster management, agriculture, and urban planning. By providing a comprehensive view of the Earth's surface, the *Khayyam* satellite enables efficient responses to natural disasters and plays a vital role in optimizing crop management, enhancing food security, and supporting urban planning.

In pursuit of its international and regional cooperation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has significantly engaged with two regional organizations, APSCO and ISNET, in the past year. Furthermore, we are glad to inform that as scheduled, Iran would host the Board of Governors meeting of Inter Islamic Network on Space Science and Technology (ISNET) in 2024.

### **Mr. Chairman**

We express deep concern over certain activities that threaten the fundamental principles and objectives of this esteemed body. The alarming trend towards weaponization of outer space poses a grave threat to the peaceful and sustainable use of this shared heritage.

Some States have increased military investments in space, defined space as an “arena of military operation” and developed space warfare systems and military alliances. The creation of a space force and the formation of military alliances are clear signs of the growing danger of an arms race in outer space for non-peaceful purposes. It’s all in contradiction with Article IV of Outer Space Treaty (1967).

We firmly condemn any actions that seek to transform space into a theater of war, undermining the delicate balance that has safeguarded outer space for decades.

In addition to the aforementioned concern, a pressing issue is the providing unlicensed services by large constellations, which has led to violation of the sovereignty and territorial laws of some member states of the United Nations.

In this regard, it is worth to be noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran presented all required documents and relevant evidence at the 94th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board, demonstrating that *STARLINK* terminals were transmitting from within its territory. According

to the decision of the Board, providing transmissions from unauthorized territories directly violates the provisions of RR Article 18, Resolution 22 (WRC-19), and Resolution 25 (WRC-03).

The Board urged the Administration of the United States to comply with the provisions by taking immediate action to disable *STARLINK* terminals operating within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite the explicit emphasis of the board and continuous efforts through UN bodies, such as COPUOS and ITU, to address this issue, these illegal activities continue.

It is also worth mentioning that in December 2023 the ITU established a new agenda item for the WRC-27 (World Radio Communication Conference), to limit the unauthorized operations of non-geostationary-satellite orbit earth stations.

Expanding the use of satellite constellations without state supervision will lead to an increase in unlawful acts. The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to ensuring that the development of mega and large satellite constellations does not undermine national interests or lead to a space arms race. We call on all stakeholders to conduct thorough assessments of the security and military implications related to these constellations. It is crucial to address these concerns through regulatory and supervisory mechanisms that ensure the sustainable deployment of satellite constellations.

We urge COPUOS to take immediate and decisive action to address this pressing issue, as it not only violates international law but also undermines the principles of equitable access to space. In a situation where the challenges are expanding with the increase of space activities, COPUOS shall play its distinctive role along with statutory requirements.

In this regard and in accordance with our agenda, the topic of “Dark and Quiet Skies” and “large constellations” and their impacts shall be discussed and addressed in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

The peaceful exploration and utilization of space resources present both opportunities and challenges for the countries. As technology advances, the potential for resource extraction beyond Earth becomes increasingly viable. However, the exploration and use of such resources shall be carried out for the benefits and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

Due to the concerns about the exploitation and mining of natural resources in outer space raised by some initiatives such as the “Artemis Accords”, it is essential to establish comprehensive frameworks within the COPUOS for the governance of activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies and ensuring equal sharing of benefits derived from space resources.

This will require constructive dialogue and collaboration among all States to address these important issues and ensure that the rights of developing countries are respected.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In light of these challenges, it is imperative for all delegates to deepen their understanding of the importance of peaceful space activities and the crucial role played by COPUOS in safeguarding the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Moreover, it is further crucial to address the technology gaps that exist between States through enhanced international cooperation. While space exploration and utilization have traditionally been pursued by a few technologically advanced countries, it is imperative to bridge these gaps and provide equal opportunities for all States to participate and contribute. By strengthening international collaboration cooperation, knowledge sharing, technology transfer and capacity-building programs, developing countries would be able to actively engage in space activities. This will not only benefit their scientific and technological advancements but also promote global innovation and progress. We urge all Member States to prioritize efforts to reduce technology gaps and ensure a level playing field in the exploration and utilization of outer space.

One significant challenge in the voluntary implementation of the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities (LTS) guidelines is the technological disparity among the Member States. During the second week of the 61<sup>st</sup>STSC, the workshop on LTS will take place which we hope will be an effective step in this domain.

Last but not least, the increasing demands of developing countries need to be addressed. The international recognition and support of COPUOS are paramount in holding private companies accountable, ensuring the peaceful use of outer space, and preventing the establishment of parallel structures outside the scope of the United Nations.

Countering the weaponization of space, and upholding the principles that underpin the peaceful use of outer space shall guide us towards a collective commitment for the peaceful uses of outer space. Together, we can secure a future where space remains a realm of scientific advancement, technological innovation, and shared benefits for all humanity.

**I thank you!**