

UNCOPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

61st Session, Vienna/Austria, January 29 – February 9, 2024

Statement by the Republic of Rwanda on

Agenda item 5: “Space for sustainable development: technology and its applications, including the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.”

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Rwandan delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Director Aarti Holla-Maini for her appointment as the new Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). I would also like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Subcommittee and assure you of our full support

Madam Chair, I am pleased to speak on behalf of Rwanda, sharing our commitment to using space technology for sustainable development. Rwanda believes in the importance of space technology for global cooperation and supports the ongoing work of the UNCOPUOS Committee in considering space applications for sustainable development.

Rwanda has leveraged the applications of space technology to contribute to the achievement of various SDGs' goals. Through Earth Observation, Rwanda has been promoting the utilization of satellite data in agriculture monitoring, urbanization, deforestation monitoring, and disaster risk management.

Madam Chair, by using various geospatial data, Rwanda is now able to indicate the proximity of households to different basic services (Hospitals, Schools, etc.) under the “Urbanization project”.

Considering that Agriculture is the main economic activity in Rwanda with 70% of the population engaged in the sector, more effort has been put in the modernization of agriculture and through Rwanda Space Agency and using a combination of satellite imageries and machine learning models, the “Smart Agriculture” platform has been developed to increase agricultural productivity by providing accurate, real-time

information on crop growth, health, and yield in the entire country. The platform is also being used by policymakers to make evidence-based decisions on agricultural policies and investments.

In Environmental Monitoring and Natural Resources Management: Rwanda is actively monitoring the sources of Co₂ and other greenhouse gases while also using satellite imageries to estimate the sinks of the gases to indicate the areas that have been subject to deforestation and afforestation for the required actions to combat climate change and its impact. Rwanda will continue to make further progress in using space data and capabilities in monitoring climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Additionally, Madam Chair and Distinguished Delegates, Rwanda, through the Rwanda Space Agency (RSA) and different stakeholders, uses remote sensing data and models to predict disasters and produce early warning systems to ensure that we can respond quickly to emergencies.

To conclude, we wish to emphasize on Rwanda's appreciation of the close connection between space technology and sustainable development and our different initiatives indicate our commitment to international cooperation and responsible use of space technology for global development.

Thank you for your attention, Madam Chair and Distinguished Delegates