

Statement of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the
61st Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to start by congratulating you on your election as the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and assure you of our delegation's full support and cooperation. We also express our gratitude to outgoing Chair of the Subcommittee Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay for his able leadership of the STSC.

We also would like to warmly welcome Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, who for the first time appear at the session of the Subcommittee in her capacity as the Director of UNOOSA. We look forward to close cooperation with you, Madam Director, and the UNOOSA under your able leadership for further advancement of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Madam Chairperson,

Outer space is a universal value and a common good that belongs to all humankind. Therefore, any outer space activity shall be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes and in accordance with the principles of non-appropriation of space by any one country.

While UN outer space treaties are the cornerstone of the legal regime governing the peaceful uses of outer space, the non-legally binding instruments, such as the LTS and space debris guidelines, are equally important and serve as guiding principles for national space policies.

The COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, supported by UNOOSA, constitute a unique platform providing the framework for the peaceful uses of outer space, with mandate in developing legal and normative rules, standards and guidelines for outer space activities, promoting international cooperation and capacity building in space science and technology.

We look forward to discussions on space related issues during the Summit of the Future and contribution to the Pact.

As a country which has only recently embarked on space activities, Armenia advocates for universal and non-discriminatory access to outer space for all states, for sustainable and responsible exploration of space resources. The rights of developing countries and new space actors to have an equal and unhindered access to space and opportunities to engaging in space activities should be guaranteed.

At the same time, the rapid technological development may lead to a widening technological divide. Therefore, an improved access to space-based technologies and applications is becoming vital for developing countries.

Madam Chairperson,

Armenia places great significance on the development of our national space related capacities and space science and technology, with special focus on Earth observation.

The launch of the first Armenian satellite bolstered significant interest in Armenia towards space research and technologies, and the envisaged adoption of the first National Space Strategy will define the strategic direction of future efforts of Armenia in this domain.

In 2023 Armenia launched its first Space Master programme, "Aerospace Engineering", which is a collaborative effort between the International Scientific-Educational Center of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, "Engineering Association" NGO and Enterprise Incubator Foundation. The programme, which combines professional courses with practical components and involves laboratory and research activities, aims to develop aerospace engineering in Armenia and equip specialists with robust scientific and practical potential.

Space Camp programme in Armenia, which in 2023 gathered together around 100 students aged from 15 to 17, featured a series of lectures and practical training designed to introduce students to the space industry and science, with focus on Earth observation data and technologies and their various applications. Efforts were made to ensure gender balance, resulting in nearly equal participation between boys and girls.

We attach particular importance to developing effective national capacities for using the space-based information and satellites observation data in the area of disaster management and mitigation of climate change impact. In 2023 the Center for Ecological-Noosphere Studies (CENS) of the National Academy of Sciences, one of the leading research institutions, through widely using space and airborne data and technologies, and in cooperation with various international partners launched a number of projects for assessing and monitoring the ecological state of different environmental components, such as air, water, soil.

Space debris is another topic that remained within the focus of relevant institutions in Armenia. Notably, the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory of the National Academy of Sciences has been monitoring near-Earth space to detect space debris and determine their coordinates. In 2023, approximately 2 million measurements were taken on about 4 thousand space objects.

In December 2023 Armenia has joined the Board of Governance of the UN affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP), hosted by India, which is another important step towards developing our national space related capacities. We would like to express our appreciation to the Centre and its leadership for the support to the Armenian application and we look forward to not only benefitting from the opportunities provided by the Centre but also contributing to its work.

Madam Chairperson,

The increasing importance of outer space is reflected in the growing use of space-based technologies and steadily expanding space economy and industry. Many developments in this domain are driven by private initiatives, scientific and research institutions.

On 1 December 2023, Hayasat-1, the first-ever satellite designed and manufactured by Armenian scientists and engineers, was launched into space by a SpaceX rocket from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California. This Cubesat was jointly developed by the Yerevan-based Bazoomq Space Research Laboratory, a private space initiative, and the Armenian Center for Scientific Innovation and Education.

The Bazoomq foundation is also actively working on technological solutions to mitigate space debris risks, including the development of a novel concept for LEO satellites deorbiting system, which is expected to be more lightweight, simple, reliable, and cost-effective.

We are also very much looking forward to host the AMADEE-24 Mars simulation, a 26-nation Mars analog field mission to be hosted in Armenia in March and April 2024. As a cooperation between the Armenian Space Forum and the Austrian Space Forum, a carefully selected crew of six analog astronauts will conduct experiments in the fields of geoscience, robotics and human factors in a base station in the Armash region. This shall also serve for capacity building in Mars analog research in Armenia and reach out to the students and young professionals in a dedicated programme. We would like to express our appreciation for the support of the Government of Austria for this cooperation and the 26 COPOUS member states involved in this project.

Madam Chairperson,

We believe that enhancing space-derived economic benefits, promoting the development of space industry, facilitating the integration of the space sector with other sectors such as energy, public health, environment, as well as using the potential of space to solve today's challenges, including climate change, and leveraging space-related innovations to improve the quality of life will bring us closer to realizing the sustainable development goals and reaching the targets of the 2030 Agenda.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, we once again would like to reiterate Armenia's support to you and look forward to fruitful deliberations during this session.

Thank you.