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English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
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Gender equality and the empowerment of women: contribution by the Office for Outer Space Affairs

Note by the Secretariat

1. The purpose of this conference room paper is to outline the work and plans of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to provide information about the International Gender Champions Initiative, which has recently been extended to Vienna. The Office's activities, and the Initiative, were made in response to continuous joint efforts by Member States and the Organization aimed at strengthening work in the field of gender equality and empowerment of women.
2. The Office for Outer Space Affairs has a sound history of contributing to one of the top priorities of the United Nations, namely, furthering the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment within the policies and programmes of the United Nations system.
3. This contribution is being built up through — to mention a few — gender mainstreaming-related practices in the Office's policies and daily operations; active participation in the relevant work and activities of the United Nations Office at Vienna; active participation and contribution of the Director of the Office in various forums and initiatives; and being pursued to achieve the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment at the international level.
4. These activities have been conducted in line with, and taking into account, the work, the strategies, and the policies of the Organization and its Secretary-General; the United Nations Office at Vienna; the United Nations interagency collaboration on the advancement of women and gender equality; and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).
5. In its above-explained work, the Office also pays due attention and takes action regarding *Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls* of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Office is developing the basis for the "Space for Women" Project in support of the implementation of the UNISPACE+50 Thematic Priority on "Capacity-building for the 21st century" as well as addressing Sustainable Development Goal 5.
6. While the Office for Outer Space Affairs is the gateway to space in the United Nations, many United Nations and other entities — both governmental and non-governmental — already have expertise, skills and experience in both the



empowerment of women and encouraging women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It is important and valuable for the Office for Outer Space Affairs to develop partnerships with such entities to benefit from their expertise and build projects at the intersect of our respective mandates.

7. In order to consolidate existing knowledge, create partnerships, elaborate targeted capacity-building activities, align capacity-building with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and address new thematic areas for the “Space for Women” Project, UNOOSA is organizing a “Space for Women” Expert Meeting in New York from 4-6 October 2017, in collaboration with UN Women.

8. The “Space for Women” Expert Meeting will bring together decision makers and experts from international organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations as well other high-ranking officials and representatives of the private sector and research institutions to discuss the scope and goals of the “Space for Women” Project and make concrete recommendations for the project. The event will include the presentation of lessons learned and new ideas focusing on the project along the tagline of “Space for Women and Women for Space”, specifically:

- Let’s make space work for the empowerment of women;
- Let’s make space in the aerospace industry and STEM fields for women; and
- Let’s make the Space for Women project together.

9. The outcomes of the Expert Meeting will be fed into the Office for Outer Space Affairs’ preparations towards UNISPACE+50 and will also be developed into a tangible “Space for Women” project to be presented at UNISPACE+50. Furthermore, the United Nations Expert Meeting on Space For Women will also aim to steer the interest of stakeholders to actively engage in the “Space for Women” project as well as to start generating the necessary resources for the final implementation of the project. For more information please see <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/ourwork/topics/spaceforwomen/expert-meeting-017/announcement.html>.

10. In addition to these activities, the Director of the Office has expressed her intention to join the International Gender Champions Initiative (<http://genderchampions.com>). The initiative, established in Geneva and then extended to New York and now to Vienna, seeks to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace. These goals are strongly supported by the Director and the wider Office. The initiative will be launched in the Vienna International Centre Rotunda on 14 June. As part of her pledge of support, the Director will make a number of commitments to defend and promote gender balanced representation and gender mainstreaming in the work of the Office. The text of her commitments will then join others’ commitments on the webpage of the Gender Champions Initiative, including those of the United Nations Secretary-General. The pledge of support of the Director of the Office is contained in Annex I to the present conference room paper.

11. The Office intends to continue to apprise the Committee and its Subcommittees on the issue.

Annex 1

International Gender Champions: Pledge of Support

I, *Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)*, support the *International Gender Champions Initiative*.

As the Director of UNOOSA, I hereby undertake to promote gender balanced representation and gender mainstreaming through the following concrete actions:

1. Systematically raise the importance of women's empowerment and the gender dimensions of different issues at key thematic meetings and events at the level of UNOOSA. Do the same for activities conducted by the Office with outside partners and stakeholders.
2. Work to identify and eliminate unconscious gender bias at all levels in UNOOSA, and use the same approach when dealing with all the relevant stakeholders.
3. Ensure balanced participation by women and men in debates and events related to the Office's activities, including by collecting relevant statistical data for evaluation and planning.
4. Advise and encourage representatives of States and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and its Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees, as well as managers of the Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education (affiliated to the United Nations) to launch or support, as appropriate, measures, decisions and initiatives promoting gender equality across the entire spectrum of their activities in the field of the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space, including education and employment of the youth. In this context, increase efforts in furthering the "Space for Women" Initiative in the framework of the UNISPACE+50 special segment of the 61st session of COPUOS in June 2018 with the aim of developing a full-fledged Space for Women project.
5. Within the context of the "Space for Women" Initiative, promote gender mainstreaming and balanced representation in policies, projects and activities of UNOOSA.
6. Support actions or initiatives taken by other Vienna-Based Organizations and Permanent Missions aimed at promotion of gender equality and advancement of women's rights, including resolutions and joint statements.
7. Make sure that formal statements delivered on behalf of UNOOSA contain a vocal emphasis from a gender perspective, as appropriate.