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English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Sixty-sixth session
Vienna, 31 May–9 June 2023

United Nations/Portugal Conference on Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

Paper submitted by Portugal

I. Introduction

1. Space activities have a growing relevance on daily life in contemporary societies. Today, our way of life is unimaginably without the use of space data and information. Since the advent of the space activities, humans have become more dependent of space technology, as it was recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations leading to the creation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1958.

2. The Committee with its mandate and position at the centre of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and the global governance of outer space activities, consistent with international law, played a key role in the organization of the first three United Nations conferences on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, held in 1968, 1982 and 1999.

3. At the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the first conference and based on the results of the UNISPACE+50 process, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 73/6 “Space2030” agenda, recognizing space as a major driver and contributor to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for the benefit of all. Within this resolution, space technology is identified as a fundamental tool to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, requiring a stronger coordination and support at all international levels, including through improved access to space-based data, applications and space infrastructure. Based on the four pillars of space economy, space society, space accessibility and space diplomacy the “Space2030” Agenda establishes the following overarching objectives:

- Enhance space-derived economic benefits and strengthen the role of the space sector as a major driver of sustainable development;
- Harness the potential of space to solve everyday challenges and leverage space-related innovation to improve the quality of life;
- Improve access to space for all and ensure that all countries can benefit socioeconomically from space science and technology applications and space-



based data, information and products, thereby supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

- Build partnerships and strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and in the global governance of outer space activities.

4. These overarching objectives have the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as a common trait due to its importance in current and emerging space activities contributors. The guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities adopted in 2019, are a comprised compendium of internationally recognized measures for, and commitments to, ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and in particular the safety of space operations.

II. Objective

5. At the time of its 75th anniversary, the United Nations Member States requested the United Nations Secretary-General to report with recommendations to respond to current and future challenges. In the United Nations 75 Declaration, Governments called for a renewed multilateralism, one that strengthened global governance for the common future of present and coming generations.

6. In response to the UN75 call, the Secretary-General devoted a significant section of his Our Common Agenda report to outer space governance. In this report, the importance of the space sector is well reflected in the third proposed commitment “Promote peace and prevent conflicts”, under the goal to Deliver Global Public Goods and Address Major Risks, where it states:

*“[...] A combination of binding and non-binding norms is needed, building on existing frameworks and drawing in the full range of actors now involved in space exploration and use. Immediate actions could include the development of a global regime to coordinate space traffic and the elaboration of new instruments to prevent weaponization of outer space. To that end, **consideration could be given to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space as part of a Summit of the Future bringing together Governments and other leading space actors. The dialogue could seek high-level political agreement on the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities.**”*

7. The report, recommends the organization of a high-level multi-stakeholder “Summit of the Future” (well-coordinated and complementary to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (in 2023)) to advance ideas for governance arrangements that should be preceded by preparatory events and consultations, which among other topics will address:

“Outer Space, to seek agreement on the sustainable and peaceful use of outer space, move towards a global regime to coordinate space traffic and agree on principles for the future governance of outer space activities;”

8. In 2022, the United Nations General Assembly approved the resolution A/76/L.87 “Modalities for the Summit of the Future”, that recommends stakeholders and member states to engage in the preparatory process of the Summit. Space should be included in this process and the preparatory process should bring together relevant stakeholders to discuss and to contribute with ideas and proposals for the Summit of the Future, with the aim to ensure the benefits of space are available to the widest variety of possible users in all countries around the world in a long-term and sustainable manner. The Summit will bring together Heads of State and Ministers to agree on a Pact for the Future and it is the hope that outer space sustainability included in the consideration for inclusion on the consultation.

9. Furthermore, in follow-up to Our Common Agenda and in preparation for the Summit of the Future in 2024, the Secretary-General is publishing a set of Policy

Briefs to further expand on the analyses and recommendations from that report. On 29.05.2023 the Secretary-General launched Policy Brief 7 “For all humanity: The future of Outer Space governance” in which he follows suit on his proposals to Member States and examines the extraordinary changes underway in outer space and assesses the sustainability, safety, and security impacts of these changes on present and future governance. The Brief outlines major trends that are impacting space sustainability and the positive impact these trends could have on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It also outlines major trends affecting the security of outer space activities and the risks to humanity that could materialize if these challenges are not solved. Finally, to support the Members States in their preparation of the Summit of the Future the Secretary-General provides a set of governance recommendations that seek to maximize the opportunities of outer space while minimizing short- and long-term risks.

10. At its core, the United Nations promotes multilateral dialogue, cooperation and inclusiveness and has taken advantage of its convening power to bring together the Member States to discuss the peaceful uses of outer space since the 1950s. Through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, diplomatic and scientific experts shepherded the development and agreement of five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space and other instruments. The Policy Brief acknowledges that the Committee and its two Subcommittees are at present actively engaged in several areas to foster the safety and sustainability of outer space activities. At the same time, the policy brief also highlights that further action is needed, to support the Committee in its governance role.

11. As these matters are first and foremost the prerogative of Member States and the Our Common Agenda process and Summit of the Future offers a platform for engagement on these vital issues, the Portuguese Space Agency proposed organize to together with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs a sequence of events to contribute to the roadmap of the Summit of the Future and to organise a United Nations/Portugal conference on Management and Sustainability of Space Activities.

III. Roadmap

12. The General Assembly decided that the Summit of the Future ((76/307) would be held on 22 and 23 September 2024, in New York and that the Summit will be preceded by a preparatory ministerial meeting.

13. To ensure that the Summit of the Future and the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (Sustainable Development Goals Summit) are well coordinated, noting that the Sustainable Development Goals Summit will be held on 18 and 19 September 2023 in order to maximize its visibility and impact, and noting also that the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development will be held on 20 September 2023, the General Assembly to hold the preparatory ministerial meeting for the Summit of the Future on 21 September 2023.

14. The goal of the United Nations/Portugal Conference on Management and Sustainability of Space Activities to be organized in 2024 is to provide contributions that can form an input to the Summit of the Future. To achieve this goal a sequence of preparatory events will take place to consult with Member States in a collaborative effort.

2023

<i>Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space</i>	<i>31 May–09 June 2023</i>
<i>Preparatory Ministerial Meeting</i>	<i>21 September 2023–New York</i>
<i>SDG Summit – the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development</i>	<i>19–20 September 2023–New York</i>
Virtual or Hybrid 1st Symposium on Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities	October 2023
<i>Austria/United Nations World Space Forum</i>	<i>12–14 December 2023</i>

2024

<i>Scientific and Technical subcommittee 61st session</i>	<i>29 January–09 February 2024</i>
Virtual or Hybrid 2nd Symposium on Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities	March 2024
<i>Legal Subcommittee 63rd Session</i>	<i>15–26 April 2024</i>
Conference on Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities	May 2024, Lisbon, Portugal
<i>Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space</i>	<i>19–28 June 2024</i>
<i>Summit of the Future</i>	<i>22–23 September 2024–New York</i>