



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE FIFTIETH PERIOD OF SESSIONS OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 28 MARCH - 8 APRIL 2011, DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALI SOLTANIEH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Monday, 28th March 2011

Agenda Item 3: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to express our satisfaction for the successful Chairmanship of the 49th session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS and assure you and the members of your bureau of our full support for this session. The Group would also like to extend its appreciation to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Dr. Mazlan Othman, and her dedicated staff for the documentation and planning required for convening this meeting.

2. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its deep condolences and solidarity with the people of New Zealand and Japan for the loss of lives caused by the recent disasters that have affected those countries.

Mr. Chairman,

3. This year marks the 50th anniversary the first period of sessions of COPUOS, the 50th period of sessions of the legal subcommittee and the 50th anniversary of human spaceflight activities. The Group would like to seize this opportunity to express its high appreciation for the work that COPUOS and its two Subcommittees have carried out in promoting international cooperation on peaceful use of outer space through the elaboration of treaties governing outer space activities and offering an adequate environment to discuss matters that have great impact in the development of nations.

4. Last years have witnessed how developing countries have been engaging in Space Activities and in the discussions of COPUOS. While several Member States of the G77 and China have achieved important milestones in space activities, others are just beginning to include space activities into their national programmes. This fact shows that all members of the Group have an increasing awareness of the potential, importance and impact that space activities have today.

5. The Group of 77 and China is willing to engage in the discussions of this Subcommittee to support measures to enhance international cooperation in space activities and promote the elaboration of regulations in the legal framework so as to benefit from space activities available to all the peoples of the world. We should structure the on-going and future activities in this area with the view to contribute to both global social - economic prosperity and sustainable development, particularly for developing countries.

6. At the outset, the Group of G77 and China wishes to recall the principle of exploration of outer space on a basis of equality; the principle of the non-appropriation of outer space including the moon and other celestial bodies and the peaceful use of outer space as stated in the article 3 & 4 of the Treaty on Principles Governing the activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Activities in outer space in the last decades have increased dramatically. Newcomers from governmental or non-governmental entities from all around the world have shown the infinite potentials of outer space but also have shown its limitations and our vulnerabilities. Because of this new reality much work remains to be done and many subjects should be considered in the legal international framework of space activities. The Group is of the view that a proper and balanced use of space will be warranted if all activities carried out in this environment are supported by clear and applicable regulations, rules and recommendations to be implemented by all space actors.

8. Several of the issues to be discussed during this session are of paramount importance to developing countries. Protection of the environment, transfer of technology, international cooperation, among others, are areas that need to be strengthened through the improvement of the international legal framework related to space activities.

9. The proliferation of space debris and the increased possibilities of collisions and interference raise concerns about the long-term sustainability of space activities, particularly in the low-Earth orbit and geostationary orbit environments. The Group of G77 and China therefore welcomes the establishment of the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in the Scientific and technical subcommittee and encourages this Subcommittee to follow the discussions in that item, from a legal point of view, in order to contribute collectively to make space activities more secure for all space actors and simultaneously ensure that all countries are able to have equitable access to the limited natural resources of outer space.

10. The Group of G77 and China is of the view that this subcommittee should take into consideration the outcomes of that discussion to avoid any measures that would limit access to space by nations with emerging space capabilities. The Group is of the view that the international legal framework should be further developed to address concerns of all States, to refrain from setting up overly high standards or thresholds for space activities in a way that may hinder the enhancement of capacity building of developing countries. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the need to devote more efforts for legal capacity building and make the the required expertise available to developing countries.

11. In this context, interaction between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee should be strengthened in order to synchronize the progressive development of space law with the major scientific and technical advances in this area. The Group is of the view that this coordination and synergies between the two Subcommittees would also promote understanding, acceptance and a real implementation of the existing United Nations legal instruments.

12. We are also convinced that the role of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space provide the basis in regulating the involvement and liability of governmental, non-governmental and the private sector in this area, and reinforce the safety of the space environment.

Mr. Chairman,

13. We have indeed an adequate mechanism before us in COPUOS and its two subcommittees to address space related issues. We must recall that people worldwide count on the UN system to address global needs and the needs of the developing countries. In a spirit of cooperation and consensus, it is the hope of the Group that we will be able to address these issues and to come up with conclusions and recommendations which will contribute to global prosperity through the promotion of enhanced international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

14. The Group is prepared to engage in the discussions that are about to take place during this session of the Legal Subcommittee and will express its views under specific agenda items.

Thank you.

Thursday, 31 March 2011

Agenda item 6a: THE DEFINITION AND DELIMITATION OF OUTER SPACE

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the prepared documentation on the definition and delimitation of outer space including the questionnaire and the responses by member states related to this issue. The Group would also like to thank the presenters and the Secretariat for the symposium on "a fresh look on the delimitation of airspace and outer space" that took place last Monday.
2. The Group of 77 and China would also like to convey its appreciation to the Chairman of the Working Group on Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space, Jose Monserat Filho of Brazil, for the work he has done in facilitating discussion in order to reach consensus among member states on this issue.
3. Since COPUOS was established fifty years ago, space activities and technology have developed tremendously and are becoming more complex. Nevertheless, this matter has remained on its agenda for fifty years. Despite lengthy debates, no consensus so far has been reached on the definition and delimitation of outer space.
4. Definition and delimitation of outer space will help to address legal clarity in the implementation of outer space law and airspace law. The Group of 77 and China encourages the Subcommittee to reinvigorate its efforts on this issue and stands ready to continue participating constructively in substantive discussions.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Thursday, 31st March 2011

Agenda item 6b: GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the preparations of this agenda item and would also like to share its views with the subcommittee on this item.
2. The geostationary orbit is a limited resource which has great potential for the implementation of a wide array of programs to benefit our countries. The Group of 77 and China is concerned by the risk of saturation that threatens the sustainability of space activities in this environment. The utilization of this orbit spectrum must be rationalized and extended to all States in conditions of equality, taking into account the necessities and interests of developing countries and the geographical location of certain countries in compliance with the established principles in the normative framework and the decisions made by both the ITU and other relevant bodies of the UN system; giving priority to the contributions of space activities to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
3. This topic should be considered within the COPUOS and its two Subcommittees in an entirely interstate environment.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Thursday, 31st March 2011

Agenda item: 10 GENERAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL MECHANISMS RELATING TO SPACE DEBRIS MITIGATION MEASURES

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the preparations of this agenda item and would also like to share its views with the subcommittee on this item.
2. The Group considers that the future of space activities largely depends on the mitigation of Space Debris. This topic should continue to be treated as a priority with the view to further increase research in the areas of technology for space debris observation, space debris environmental modeling and technologies to protect space systems from space debris and to limit substantially the creation of additional space debris.
3. In this regard, implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines is of the utmost importance. The research in the areas of technology to be carried out and its possible outcome would improve the Guidelines and keep them up to date with new techniques and capabilities of detection and reduction of space debris, in accordance with Resolution 62/217 of the General Assembly.
4. The Group considers important that a review on the effectiveness of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines to be undertaken by the Legal Subcommittee.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Monday, 4th April 2011

Agenda item 9: CAPACITY BUILDING IN SPACE LAW

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the prepared documentation on this agenda item and also would like to thank the Office of outer Space Affairs for the activities carried out during the last year on the promotion of capacity building in space law.
2. The Group of G77 and China considers that more effective efforts are needed in order to increase awareness on the importance of space law and the legal framework in carrying out space activities and programs. Capacity building in space law, in particular in developing countries, needs to be promoted through international cooperation. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China calls OOSA and Member States for greater support to enhance cooperation of both North-South and South-South to facilitate the sharing of knowledge related to space law among nations.
3. The Group of 77 and China also calls upon OOSA and Member States to make available more opportunities for greater academic linkages, long term fellowships and further collaboration with universities, UN Centers of research and other national and international institutions on space law with institutions in developing countries.
4. The Group would like to highlight the activities organized by the Office of Outer Space Affairs in cooperation with host countries aimed to enhance the capacity building in space law and regional and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The work carried out by UNOOSA with space law educators and representatives of the representatives of the regional centers for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, should further focus on the development of the curriculum on space law.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Wednesday, 6 April 2011

Agenda item 7: REVIEW AND POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE PRINCIPLES RELEVANT TO THE USE OF NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES IN OUTER SPACE

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the preparations of this agenda item and would also like to share its views with the subcommittee on this item.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to refer to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, specifically in the geo-stationary orbit and low-Earth atmosphere. More consideration should be given to this issue in order to address the legal aspects of the problem of potential collisions of nuclear powered space objects in orbit and the incidents or emergencies that may be created by an accidental reentry in the Earth's atmosphere and impact on its surface by these objects, and their consequences on health and life of people and the ecosystem.
3. The Group considers that increased attention should be given to these issues through an adequate interaction with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in order to develop strategies, long term planning and regulations related to these matters, considering the recommendations included in the Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Sources Applications in Outer Space.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.