

**G-77 handover ceremony
15 January 2021**

Statement by Simonetta Di Pippo
Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

Your Excellencies, Ambassador Natividad, Ambassador Solano Ortiz, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues

It is an honor for me to join you today.

Let me first extend my gratitude to you Ambassador Natividad, for all your efforts throughout one of the most challenging years we had to face as humanity. We are grateful for your support in increasing the engagement between the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the G77.

And let me sincerely welcome Ambassador Solano Ortiz in your new role. I wish you all the best in the coming months. We are eager to work ever more closely with the G77 by expanding our cooperative efforts. I'm looking forward to doing exactly this under your leadership.

More and more G77 countries are scaling up their space operations. And I am thrilled that the first ever satellites launched by Kenya and Guatemala were indeed launched under the UNOOSA's Access to Space for All initiative.

I am also glad to see rapid growth in the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The 25% increase in membership during my tenure in the last few years alone underlines the growing interest to invest political capital into space affairs.

Welcoming new members from the G77 almost on annual basis is a great sign of the promising future in the space industry also in the emerging and non-spacefaring countries.

Space infrastructure is critical in the modern world. We are reliant on satellites in many aspects.

UNOOSA hence remains committed to further expansion of both – the user base of space assets and COPUOS Membership.

We stand ready to work with all countries interested in knowing more about the UN's role in supporting these activities.

In this Decade of Action, even more so than ever before, I invite all G77 countries to work together with UNOOSA in creating a space sector that is enabling, engaging, accessible and sustainable so that we can all collect the fruits of decades of efforts in space science, technology and exploration.

Your Excellency Ambassador Solano Ortiz, we are already looking forward to working with you on these endeavors.

Thank you.