



**STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE SIXTY- SIXTH  
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE  
PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 31 MAY - 09 JUNE 2023,  
DELIVERED BY H.E. AFTAB AHMAD KHOKHER, AMBASSADOR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN**

**AGENDA ITEM 4: GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

Mr. Chair,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to reiterate our full cooperation and support to you, Mr. Omran Sharaf, United Arab Emirates, a member of the Group, in the discharge of your responsibilities as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).
2. The Group further takes the opportunity to thank the Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Niklas Hedman, for his opening remarks, and the Secretariat for the preparations made for this session.
3. The Group welcomes Guatemala and Uzbekistan as new members of the Committee [1]. The steady growth of COPUOS in recent years is a clear sign of the international recognition of the unique role of COPUOS as the UN forum dedicated to discussing and promoting the peaceful uses of outer space. In this regard, the Group both welcomes and encourages the participation of observers in the Committee and its Subcommittees as this contributes to greater engagement with the activities of COPUOS. It is important that more Member States of the United Nations be welcomed as this contributes to the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space.
4. The Group underscores its firm conviction that the use and exploration of the outer space shall be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes, with the view to realizing a shared vision for the future, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and in conformity with the body of applicable international law.
5. Universal and equal access to outer space for all countries without discrimination, regardless of their level of scientific, technical and economic development as well as the equitable and rational use of the outer space for the benefit and in the interests of all humankind, the principle of non-appropriation

of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, by any means, international cooperation in the development of space activities especially those referred to in the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, taking in Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, are among the most important principles that should govern the activities in outer Space.

6. The Group reaffirms the importance of preventing an arms race in outer space and placement of weapons of any kind in outer space and calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the peaceful use of outer space to prevent an arms race there and to refrain from placement of weapons of any kind in outer space and any other actions contrary to that objective. In this regard, the Group notes that transparency and confidence building measures could play a useful role. The Group believes that preservation of outer space for peaceful uses and its long-term sustainability requires the international community to ensure that no weapons will ever be placed there.

7. The Group is of the view that all outer space activities, including mega-constellations and their related operations, should fully respect the UN Charter, its principles including the principle of non-intervention and international law.

8. If mega-constellations or any satellite internet company wishes to operate into a country, these operations must respect the legal requirements, landing rights of that country and the relevant legal instruments of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

9. Developing countries are increasingly engaged in space activities and actively participating in the work of the Committee. While several Member States of this Group have achieved important milestones in space activities, others are starting to develop their own space programmes and policies. This fact is a recognition of the potential, importance and benefit of space activities. The Group also considers it crucial that developing countries are not left behind or are unfairly treated in space exploration efforts.

10. In this connection, it is imperative to intensify the efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived from outer space activities with a view to promoting the contribution of peaceful uses of outer space to socio-economic development, including the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals bearing in mind the outcome of the UNISPACE +50 process such as the UNGA resolution 73/6 and the “Space2030” Agenda. In line with the enhancement of international cooperation in outer space activities, it is vital to promote a wider participation of developing countries through active and sustained assistance by advanced space faring nations and the Office of Outer Space Affairs free from conditionalities. To

this end, capacity building, technical assistance and transfer of technology are key factors in the expansion of the abilities of those working in the field, allowing them to gain expertise and knowledge from more advanced spacefaring nations. The Group also underscores the importance of appropriate funding, as well as mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to enable the Office to provide valuable support for developing countries, including through UNOOSA's capacity building programmes.

11. Finally, Mr. Chair, with regard to the appointment of the next Director for the Office of Outer Space Affairs, the Group is closely following the appointment process and would like to express its view that the new Director should continue to lead the Office in an inclusive, transparent, effective and professional manner, while paying special attention to the needs of developing countries. Representation from developing countries in the Office and regional balance should be guaranteed as well. We look forward to working closely with the next Director in promoting the peaceful uses of outer space for sustainable development, including in meeting the "Space 2030 Agenda" advancing international cooperation, strengthening the capacity of developing countries in utilizing space applications, and encouraging inclusivity and gender equality and balance in the space sector.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[1] A/RES/77/121 para. 43

## **AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS SIXTIETH SESSION**

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay for his exemplary chairpersonship of the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and would like to comment on some of the issues put forth during the session that we consider of utmost relevance for developing countries.

2. The unfavorable financial situation of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, has limited its capacity-building activities. UNOOSA is affected by a shortage of funds to support cooperation programmes. Nevertheless, the Group would like to note with appreciation activities carried out in 2022, under the Programme on Space Applications by UNOOSA in collaboration with Member States and other international organizations.

3. With regard to the technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, the Group would like to reiterate the fact that the geostationary orbit, a limited natural resource clearly in danger of saturation, needs to be used in a way that ensures countries have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

4. The issue of accumulation of space debris continues to be a cause for concern in space. The Group therefore is of the view that the potential hazards posed by the collision of debris with space objects and the consequences of the harmful contamination of outer space cannot be underestimated. It is also important that new space actors are not overburdened due to the consequences of historical activities of established space actors. The Group would also like to emphasize the challenges caused by placement of mega constellations in low Earth orbit, including those related to collision risks and sustainable use of orbit and frequencies, and believes addressing these challenges should be a priority in the work of COPUOS.

5. Pending the adoption of legal mechanisms related to space debris mitigation and remediation, the Group takes note of the relevant voluntary measures such as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, and encourages advanced space-faring countries and other actors, especially those deploying mega-constellations, to pay due regard to their application take actions to ensure their full implementation.

The Group further underscores the importance of strengthening the capacity of developing countries for the voluntary implementation of these measures.

Mr. Chair,

6. Space science and technology, and their applications are essential in effectively addressing current and future challenges to social and economic development and sustainability, such as natural disasters, food security, climate change and natural resource security. The Group notes in this regard that space activities are also crucial to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the “Space2030” Agenda, in particular as part of efforts to support sustainable economic growth, improve quality of life and manage the global environment. It is therefore important to ensure that the Office is equipped with the necessary resources, including sufficient funding, to assist a greater number of countries in having access to the benefits of space science and technology and its applications in line with the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty and other applicable UN Treaties on Outer Space, as well as the “Space2030” Agenda.

7. The Group would like to highlight the importance of science and technology dissemination in bridging the space divide. The Group therefore calls upon the Committee and UNOOSA for greater support to the training programs of the regional centers affiliated to the United Nations, and to conduct wider exchange and cooperation among different regional centers, including through alliance of regional centers, with the aim of enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation to empower the development of technology among nations. The Group also calls upon UNOOSA and Member States to make available more opportunities for academic networking, long-term fellowships and collaboration with national and regional institutions in the field of outer space especially in developing countries.

8. The Group welcomes the adoption of the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, under the able leadership of Mr. Umamaheswaran R. from India, and looks forward to further engaging with the Working Group.

9. The Group welcomes the establishment of the Space and Global Health Platform and the Space and Global Health Network, upon the recommendation of the Working Group on Space and Global Health. The Group likewise appreciates the inclusion of “Space and global health” as a permanent agenda item of the STSC, in recognition of the role of space science and technology in various health and medical applications. In this regard, the Group welcomes the adoption of the resolution “Space and Global Health” by the United Nations General Assembly in its 77<sup>th</sup> session.

10. The Group expresses its support for the inclusion of the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society on the agenda of the STSC and notes the proposal for the potential establishment of an expert group on the matter.

11. Finally, Mr. Chair, the Group welcomes the inclusion and recognition of space as a driver of sustainable development in the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which was convened in July 2022 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: REPORT OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ITS SIXTY-SECOND SESSION**

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja of South Africa for her exemplary chairpersonship of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Legal Subcommittee, and would like to comment on some issues, which the Group deems of utmost relevance for developing countries.

2. The Group underscores once again that the definition and delimitation of outer space is a very important topic that should be kept on the agenda of this Subcommittee and that more work should be done in order to establish the legal regime applicable to airspace and outer space. In this regard, we commend all the efforts made by the Chair of the Working Group on Definition and delimitation of Outer Space and encourage all delegations to contribute to the discussion in a constructive manner.

3. Regarding the issue of geostationary orbit, the Group would like to reiterate that such a domain shall not be subject to national appropriation, by means of use, repeated use or occupation, or by any other means, and that its utilization is governed by applicable international law. Furthermore, we reiterate that this orbit needs to be used rationally, efficiently and economically, in conformity with the provision of the international space laws and relevant regulations, so that countries or groups of countries may have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of the developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

4. The Group considers that capacity building in space law is a fundamental tool that should be enhanced through international cooperation. Therefore, the Group calls for a greater support by UNOOSA and Member States to foster both North-South and South-South cooperation to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise in the fields of international space law, space policy, space economy and space diplomacy.

Mr. Chair,

5. The Group believes that all efforts to promote international cooperation must be undertaken to maximize the benefits in the utilization of space applications for all States and calls on all space-faring nations to contribute to promoting and fostering international cooperation on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis. It also underscores that particular attention be given to the interests of developing countries and that the Committee should be strengthened in its role as the main

platform for the exchange of information in the field of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space.

6. Considering the essential roles of space objects, regardless of their size, in the socioeconomic development of the Member States, the Group is of the view that the Committee and its Subcommittees should not create an ad-hoc legal regime or any other mechanisms, which might impose limitations on designing, building, launching and using of space objects. The Group is of the view that in general, all international rights and obligations of the States with respect to satellites regardless of their perceived sizes are equally relevant for the conduct of space activities with the use of small satellites.

7. While making reference to our previous statement on agenda item 6 of the STSC regarding space debris, the Group encourages launching states to provide advanced, proper, prompt and adequate notification to other states specially developing countries, located along the drop zones of falling space debris, as applicable, to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to mitigate and respond to such incidents. It is equally important to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in detecting and responding to falling space debris.

8. The Group also welcomes the work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities under its detailed workplan and methods of work. The Group remains committed to engage in this discussions to help develop an equitable, inclusive, constructive, collaborative and consensus based approach for the utilization of space resources, in line with the principles enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty and other relevant UN treaties, especially the principle of non-appropriation of Outer Space, including the moon and other celestial bodies. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China attaches high importance to the holding of an International Conference in 2024 in Vienna in conjunction with the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the LSC and looks forward to remain engaged to further decide the modalities and agenda of the International Conference to contribute in making it a success.

9. The Group is of the view that in light of the increasing participation and the evolving potential of the private sector in space activities, the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument that clearly defines and guides commercial activities in outer space could play an important role in expanding the use of outer space and stimulate space activities for the benefit of humanity. The Group considers that, besides the need for a broad debate about the implications of these activities, the developing countries shall not be excluded from the benefits of space exploration and their rights shall be taken into account in the discussion.

10. The Group takes note with appreciation the Office's multi-year project to develop an online registration portal to facilitate the registration of space objects,



in view of the increasing number of submissions. The Group likewise supports discussions at the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space on how to enhance registration practices, especially for large and or mega constellations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.