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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 26 October 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Al Hassan . . . . . (Oman)
later: Mr. Sithole (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (South Africa)

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22-24170 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 45: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/77/20)

1. **The Chair** said that space science, technology, law and policy were becoming increasingly important in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Space-based applications played a critical role in areas such as poverty eradication, food security, health, education, energy, climate change, marine resources, biodiversity and disaster management. In order to safeguard the future use of space assets, it was necessary to promote the safety of space operations and the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was the central platform for fostering international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, in particular for the benefit of developing countries, and for the multilateral consideration of space as a driver of sustainable development and the betterment of humanity.

2. **Mr. Sharaf** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and introducing the report on its sixty-fifth session (A/77/20), said that, in addition to its role as secretariat of the Committee, the Office for Outer Space Affairs had been serving as the executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems and its Providers' Forum, the secretariat of the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group and the secretariat of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The Office had also been involved in implementing the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the programme on the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER); maintaining the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space; discharging the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space and related resolutions; and supporting Member States in implementing the "Space2030" Agenda.

3. A number of significant space-related anniversaries were being marked in 2022, including the sixty-fifth anniversary of the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, and the fifty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force 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 (Outer Space Treaty). The year 2023 would mark the sixtieth anniversary of women in human space flight and 25 years since the launch of the first element of the International Space Station. Such commemorations highlighted the importance of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of humanity and created an opportunity to examine the broader contribution of outer space activities to the global development agenda.

4. The world was dependent on space systems. Space activities were thriving, and space actors were increasingly diverse. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic crisis management and relief efforts had underscored the reliance on satellite infrastructure, specific technology capabilities and space applications. International cooperation and the enhanced use of space technologies for socioeconomic development and for addressing global challenges should be further promoted.

5. With the adoption by the General Assembly of the "Space2030" Agenda and its implementation plan in 2021, States had a forward-looking strategy for strengthening the contribution of space activities and space tools to achieving global agendas and addressing long-term sustainable development concerns.

6. The Committee and its subsidiary bodies had made significant strides over the previous year. For example, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities of the Legal Subcommittee had agreed on and adopted their methods of work and workplans. The Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had agreed that its multi-year workplan would be extended to 2023. The Working Group on Space and Global Health had finalized the report on its work conducted under its multi-year workplan, recommended the establishment of the Space and Global Health Network and prepared the text of the draft resolution on space and global health (A/C.4/77/L.6) for consideration at the current session. Lastly, the Expert Group on Space Weather had presented its final report.

7. The States members of the Committee were committed to making progress, and efforts must continue to be made to enhance the role of the Committee and its subcommittees, supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, as a unique multilateral forum for fostering dialogue and cooperation. Strengthening partnerships among States and other stakeholders, fostering dialogue among spacefaring and emerging space nations and promoting the increased involvement of all countries in space activities, including through capacity-building initiatives, was crucial work.

8. **Mr. Oddone** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the exploration and use of outer space must be for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development. Space technology and its applications contributed to sustainable development in such areas as the environment, marine and coastal ecosystems, health care, climate change, disaster risk reduction and emergency response, agriculture and food security. International cooperation in space activities was essential and could contribute to the development of space science and technology and their applications; foster the development of space capabilities in the States concerned; and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology among States.

9. The region of Latin America and the Caribbean had great potential for space cooperation, which constituted one of the areas of work of the pro tempore presidency of CELAC. The agreement establishing the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency had been opened for signature on 18 September 2021 and currently had 20 signatories. Once the threshold of 11 ratifications had been reached, the Agency would begin its work to strengthen regional capacities, including by reinforcing ties between its members, conducting space-related scientific activities, promoting the exchange of information and technology transfer and developing its own satellite technology.

10. Full respect for international law was fundamental to ensuring equitable access to the use of outer space for the entire international community. For developing countries, it was not just a matter of technological development but a question of pursuing sustainable development. In an increasingly challenging context, all available tools must be used to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the use and exploration of outer space should be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development. With a view to building capacities in space science and technologies, the partnership between spacefaring and emerging spacefaring nations should be strengthened and collaboration with relevant international organizations and agencies should be intensified. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Office for Outer Space Affairs should continue to conduct programmes and activities to narrow gaps in space technology across countries. ASEAN sought to forge closer regional cooperation through the ASEAN Research and Training Centre for Space Technology and Applications and looked forward to working closely with all relevant partners to advance research and development. Devising a proper legal framework to facilitate international cooperation in space was of the utmost importance, with full respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

12. Space-based technologies could be used in disaster risk reduction to enhance the capacity for preparedness, response and mitigation. Through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, ASEAN had enhanced the utilization of such technologies in its response system, with a view to improving early warning systems and search and rescue operations. There was a need to strengthen the implementation of UN-SPIDER, particularly for developing countries.

13. With regard to the importance of ensuring the safety, security and sustainability of outer space, the proliferation of space debris was a continuing concern. ASEAN called for the immediate implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and supported the advancement of technological solutions to the space debris problem. Countries should refrain from actions that might further undermine the sustainable and stable use of outer space.

14. ASEAN welcomed efforts to explore the contributions of space technology and its applications towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda, which included enhancing the resilience of public health systems. Such resilience had proved vital in the global fight against the pandemic, not only in ensuring that communities had access to health care, but also in providing means for maintaining social inclusion through digital connectivity.

15. ASEAN reiterated its long-standing commitment to working closely with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees, as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in promoting inclusive international space cooperation and governance, to ensure equitable access for all countries to space science and its applications.

16. **Mr. Chatard Moulin** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and the potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that the session was regrettably taking place against the backdrop of a brutal aggression in Europe. The European Union condemned in the strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which grossly

violated international law including the Charter of the United Nations and undermined European and global security and stability. The Russian Federation should immediately cease its military actions, unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. In the light of the aggression against Ukraine, the European Union and its member States could no longer support the process noted in General Assembly resolution 76/76 regarding the establishment of a new United Nations-affiliated regional centre for space science and technology education hosted in the Russian Federation. All States Members of the United Nations were invited to reconsider their position in that regard, and the Office for Outer Space Affairs was called upon to refrain from initiating any cooperation projects with the Russian Federation in the current situation.

17. The European Union strongly supported the rules-based international system, with the United Nations at its core, and a multilateral approach to international affairs, including outer space issues. The important role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in global space governance had been recognized by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982) and was further illustrated by its growing membership. The Office for Outer Space Affairs played an important role in supporting the work of the Committee and its subcommittees. The United Nations framework of space treaties constituted the cornerstone of international space law and was complemented by relevant General Assembly resolutions.

18. The European Union continued to promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space, while stressing the need to foster responsible behaviour in outer space and to strengthen commitments to avoid potentially harmful interference in the peaceful and free exploration and use of outer space.

19. The European Union looked forward to contributing to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, including its working groups. The European Union welcomed the agreement on the terms of reference, methods of work and work plan of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, and its member States were already in the process of implementing the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, by drafting or amending national laws, strategies and policies. The European Union also welcomed the recent agreement on the mandate, terms of reference, work plan and methods of work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities and stood ready to advance its work in the intersessional period and to support its Chair and Vice-Chair in their efforts to seek consensus on outstanding issues.

20. Since 2016, under the European Union Space Programme, the European Union Space Surveillance and Tracking system had been providing continuous services for a growing community of users, including collision avoidance for 300 satellites. Further services, such as the development of space debris mitigation and remediation activities, were envisaged. A European Union approach to space traffic management had been agreed in order to pave the way for a possible multilateral approach in the framework of the United Nations.

21. The European Union underlined the importance of implementing the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and called upon all States Members of the United Nations to avoid the creation of space debris in order to preserve the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space in a peaceful manner for present and future generations.

22. The adoption of the "Space2030" Agenda and its implementation plan was testimony to the success of multilateralism in the space sector. The role of the Agenda as an emerging avenue for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals had been recognized in the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council (E/HLS/2022/1).

23. The European Union Agency for the Space Programme and the Office for Outer Space Affairs had signed a memorandum of understanding in March 2022. Their long-standing partnership was built on common objectives regarding international cooperation in space activities and the use of space technology, data and services to achieve sustainable development. Activities would include joint studies, user needs assessments, capacity-building across a range of space fields and fostering the space economy. A report on how satellite navigation systems and Earth observation technologies could actively support the transition towards a world with 8 billion people would be published by the end of 2022.

24. Under the European Earth Observation Programme (Copernicus), dedicated satellites to monitor carbon dioxide and a data assimilation service to provide estimations of greenhouse gas emissions were being

developed in close coordination with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and would be used to support the global stocktakes from 2028 and the parties to the Paris Agreement in their policy implementation.

25. **Mr. Lagdameo** (Philippines) said that the use and exploration of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of social, economic or scientific development. Outer space activities must be conducted in an inclusive manner, on the basis of full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and equity.

26. The Philippine Space Act of 2019 contained a comprehensive space policy to protect the country's sovereignty and national interests and to respond to regional developments, including the pursuit of space capabilities by neighbouring States. That groundbreaking legislation defined the role of the new Philippine Space Agency, under the Office of the President, and provided for the creation of a Philippine Space Council, to be chaired by the President and selected members of the Cabinet. The Philippine space policy framework was focused on six thematic areas: national security and development; hazard management and climate studies; space research and development; space industry capacity-building; space education and awareness; and international cooperation. Since the 1960s, the Philippines had had an interest in outer space, resulting in efforts to build satellites and involvement in such areas as education, capacity-building and international cooperation, including with Japan.

27. The role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as the main platform for the promotion of international cooperation to provide appropriate technical assistance to developing countries in space-related activities should be strengthened, as should international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The Philippines took a whole-of-government approach to respond to space issues, beginning with initiatives from the Philippine Space Council, such as the creation of the Technical Working Group on Orbital Debris Protocols. At the regional level, the Philippines participated in the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Those platforms provided opportunities for scientific, technical and policy exchange and international cooperation.

28. The technological space divide between developing and developed countries should be bridged through capacity-building programmes and outreach activities in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The Philippines participated in initiatives of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, such as the "Space2030" Agenda, the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities. The safety, security and sustainability of the use and exploration of outer space should be ensured through increased voluntary implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. It was essential to prevent any possibility of an arms race in outer space through transparent confidence-building measures.

29. **Ms. Al Senani** (Oman) said that outer space had come to play a fundamental role in socio-economic development and in such areas as monitoring climate change and desertification, disaster management and improving the management of natural resources. It should be used in a peaceful manner and for the benefit of all States. Oman had established a Space Habitat Centre to focus on preparatory training for astronauts and conduct analogue missions. In order to reap the economic benefits of outer space projects, space agencies should be encouraged to enter into local and international partnerships and invest in accelerating the transition to the digital economy and space-related industries. For its part, the Government of Oman was open to investing in relevant public-private partnerships.

30. **Mr. Ghelich** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as one of the founding members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, his country continued to reaffirm the universally agreed principle that outer space was a common heritage for all humankind. Outer space must be explored and utilized exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of present and future generations in conformity with applicable international law. It should also be accessible for exploration and rational use by all States on the basis of equality and non-discrimination, with full respect for the principle of non-appropriation of any part of outer space. While transparency and confidence-building measures were essential to ensuring the peaceful use of outer space, non-intervention and non-interference in the activities of States that were exploring and utilizing outer space for peaceful purposes must also be fully observed. It was important to strengthen international collaboration and promote compliance with the United Nations treaties on outer space. A multilateral approach to international affairs should be supported, and illegal unilateral coercive measures against developing countries should be rejected.

31. The more advanced spacefaring nations should be encouraged to participate in knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and technical assistance with developing countries. However, such initiatives should not be used as a pretext to impose limitations on the space programmes of developing countries. Research and development in space science and technology played a key role in achieving sustainable development, as well as protecting the outer space environment. Universal endeavours against the militarization and placement of weapons of any kind in outer space should be enhanced, and his country fully supported the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

32. The increase in space debris and its impact on the sustainable use of outer space was a common concern and addressing it was a shared responsibility. However, the principle of differentiated responsibility applied, whereby those who had created such space debris were responsible for its removal. It was important to recognize both the historical differences in the contributions of developed and developing States to outer space problems, and the differences in their respective economic and technical capacities to tackle such problems. Any measures to address space debris should be considered thoroughly and agreed upon by consensus.

33. *Mr. Sithole (South Africa), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

34. **Mr. Gutiérrez Plata** (Colombia) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was the appropriate forum for the consideration of sustainability and security matters related to outer space, as it had the necessary expertise, institutional capacity and support from its members. Colombia had participated constructively in multilateral discussions on such matters and reaffirmed that the use and exploration of outer space must be exclusively for peaceful purposes. In 2021, Colombia had supported the creation of the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours and had participated in its meetings in 2022. Discussions concerning the Outer Space Treaty and related agreements, and their implications in the current geopolitical context, should be conducted within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

35. An inclusive multilateral framework should be developed to govern private sector activities and the exploitation of natural resources in outer space, taking into account the interests of all States, with a view to upholding minimum standards of transparency and competence. Measures should be adopted to guarantee the long-term sustainability of activities in outer space. The possibility of an arms race remained a concern.

36. Space technology had contributed to transforming humankind's way of life owing to its applications in such areas as information and communications technologies, navigation and scientific research. However, advances in space technology had exacerbated security concerns. An updated international regulatory framework, confidence-building measures and enhanced cooperation were needed to ensure that all States could access the benefits of space technology.

37. The peaceful use of outer space should be pursued through international cooperation, and work should continue towards that objective within the framework of both the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It was important to take steps towards the adoption of voluntary measures, such as best practice guidelines, transparency and confidence-building measures and norms of safe and responsible behaviour in outer space, with a view to avoiding aggressive actions in outer space.

38. **Mr. Kim** Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the rapid progress attained in space science and technology could be applied to fields with a direct bearing on the life and safety of humankind, including disaster management and environmental protection. Many developing countries were launching satellites into outer space, which had long been regarded the exclusive domain of certain developed countries. That reality greatly enhanced the utility value of outer space as a common asset of humankind and provided diverse opportunities for international cooperation in the field of space development. Such international cooperation should be fair and mutually beneficial for developed and the developing countries. There was a need to create an international environment to provide developing countries with free access to space technology and facilitate joint development and investment in new technologies on the basis of respect for the established intellectual property system.

39. The militarization and weaponization of outer space, which presented a threat to the peaceful use of outer space, should not be allowed. The space policy document of the United States of America that had been released in August 2022 drew the concern of the international community. It contained guidelines for enhancing the country's military operations capability in space, designating space as a priority domain of national military power under the guise of advancing national

security. That approach should be denounced and condemned.

40. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been advancing the peaceful development of space science and technology since the 1980s and had manufactured and launched a satellite, despite persistent sanctions. The peaceful use of outer space was a sovereign right and the legitimate right of States parties to the Outer Space Treaty. The United States was using all means at its disposal to prevent the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from engaging in international exchanges and cooperation in the field of outer space, by fabricating "sanctions resolutions" of the Security Council that unjustly found fault with a peaceful satellite launch. However, such acts would not stop the dynamic advance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea towards the peaceful conquest of outer space. As a space power that had acceded to four major instruments on outer space, his country would continue to exercise its legitimate right to the exploration of outer space and further promote cooperation and exchanges with relevant international organizations and other countries in the sphere of outer space.

41. **Mr.** Naeem Sabir **Khan** (Pakistan) said that, as the common heritage of humankind, space should be used for peaceful purposes and should remain accessible to all nations on a non-discriminatory basis, irrespective of their level of scientific, technical or economic development. Pakistan had been a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space since 1973 and had ratified all five United Nations space treaties. The focus of its national space programme was the pursuit of sustainable socioeconomic progress. Accordingly, Pakistan used its space capabilities in diverse fields such as agriculture, health, water management, meteorology, climate change mitigation, health, humanitarian assistance, disaster management, satellite navigation and communication, and was committed to conducting all its outer space activities in a peaceful, transparent and safe manner. A special emphasis was placed in its space policy on international cooperation, as reflected in its membership in the International Astronautical Federation, the Committee on Space Research, the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization and the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum. Pakistan had also applied for membership in the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, which would promote the compatibility, interoperability and transparency of its current and future satellite navigation systems.

42. The Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission of Pakistan hosted the Regional Support Office of UN-SPIDER, the Mission Control Centre of the Cospas-Sarsat System and the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology. Pakistan had organized the third International Conference on Space, held from 28 to 30 March 2022 in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology.

43. The "Space2030" Agenda provided the framework to use space as a driver for sustainable development. However, that potential could not be realized unless the widening space divide was addressed. Developing countries faced considerable technical and financial hurdles that prevented them from fully benefiting from space technologies. Robust international cooperation for capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer were vital to ensure that developing nations could meaningfully enjoy their right to explore and use outer space, which must be treated as a global commons. The Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities should further build on the progress already achieved in that regard. Space traffic management was important for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The ever-increasing number of objects being launched into orbit was a concern. Space debris mitigation was a common but differentiated responsibility.

44. Pakistan had been a strong and consistent proponent of the prevention of the arms race in outer space and was against the weaponization of outer space. It was disappointing that countries were already treating space as a war-fighting domain and building relevant military capabilities. Similarly, anti-satellite tests, not least because of their debris-generating effect, remained a matter of concern. The existing normative and legal architecture governing the security dimension of outer space had not kept pace with growing risks. For decades, the international community had been calling for "further measures" and "appropriate international negotiations" to prevent an arms race in outer space, including through the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and numerous subsequent resolutions. Despite the issue being on its agenda for almost four decades, the Conference on Disarmament had been prevented, and was still being prevented, by some States from starting negotiations on an international agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Those negotiations should begin immediately, with a view to comprehensively addressing the gaps in the international legal framework governing the exploration and use of outer space.

45. The evolving framework on long-term sustainability must not impose undue or unreasonably high standards and obligations, which might be prejudicial to the interests of developing and emerging space countries. The normative and legal framework governing exploration, exploitation and use of space resources must be consistent with existing international space law, that is the five United Nations space treaties, in particular the Outer Space Treaty, and fully respect the principles of non-appropriation and equitable access. The emerging trend towards unilateral national legislation governing space activities, which might be at odds with international instruments and obligations, was worrisome. Similarly, while voluntary norms to regulate behaviour in space were useful, they could not be a substitute for legally binding instruments.

46. Existing legal instruments, such as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, had played a constructive role in the peaceful use of outer space and prohibiting the deployment of weapons of mass destruction and the conduct of military activities. Collective efforts were needed to consolidate and reinforce existing systems.

47. **Ms. Archinard** (Switzerland) said that the use and exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes provided essential technological tools for the sustainable development and well-being of societies. While access to satellite technologies had increased, the growing number of satellites in orbit had also brought new challenges, which made international cooperation and multilateral dialogue all the more important. The United Nations and its Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had a key role to play in ensuring that space could be used in a safe and sustainable manner over the long term for the benefit of the greatest number of people.

48. Switzerland welcomed the adoption of the "Space2030" Agenda, which would contribute to strengthening the use of space technologies for sustainable development. Switzerland was working towards the implementation of the objectives under the Agenda, both at the national level and through its participation in international organizations, such as the European Space Agency, the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites and the World Meteorological Organization.

49. Within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Switzerland was committed to promoting the use of space applications in the field of global health. It welcomed the decisions taken to strengthen dialogue and interdisciplinary cooperation between health and space actors by establishing, in collaboration with the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the World Health Organization, the Space and Global Health Platform based in Geneva and the Space and Global Health Network. Her delegation invited relevant States and actors to join the Network to exchange experiences, share knowledge and establish new collaborations in a multidisciplinary framework. Switzerland fully supported the draft resolution on space and global health, which represented a milestone in two decades of efforts and should pave the way for further action.

50. As the number of operational satellites in orbit had more than doubled in five years, Switzerland welcomed the work of the Committee on the long-term sustainability of space activities and in particular the adoption of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities in 2019. Switzerland was conducting an analysis of the implementation of the Guidelines at the national level. It was revising its space policy and formulating a national legal framework for space activities. The Swiss delegation would continue to be actively involved in the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. International exchange and coordination, as well as capacity-building, were essential to foster the implementation of the guidelines and find solutions to emerging challenges in outer space.

51. In view of a future return to the Moon, Switzerland was pleased that the Committee had decided to address the legal issues relating to the use of resources in space. Multilateral work was essential to develop a common understanding of legal aspects, while taking into account the scientific and technical aspects and the interests of different actors, including the private sector. Switzerland supported the mandate, the plan and the working methods of the Legal Subcommittee and would participate in its work.

52. On the subject of dark and quiet skies, Switzerland shared the concern expressed by the International Astronomical Union and several States regarding the impact of large satellite constellations on ground-based astronomical observations. It was pleased that discussions were continuing within the Committee on such issues. Lastly, Switzerland looked forward to the dialogue on space security and sustainability that would take place between the First and Fourth Committees, which would help to ensure consistency and complementarity in their work.

53. **Ms. Tayob** (South Africa) said that, as an emerging spacefaring nation, South Africa placed great

importance on the peaceful use and exploration of outer space, with a view to harnessing its potential for sustainable development, for the benefit of all nations. An international order must be upheld in the pursuit of outer space activities, premised on international law, with the United Nations at its core.

54. International cooperation was the cornerstone of her country's space programme. The African continent had high demand for space products and services, with its economy increasingly becoming space-dependent, including in such areas as communications technology, e-banking, disaster management and health care. South Africa had launched the first satellite constellation to be fully developed on the African continent in 2022. The Maritime Domain Awareness Satellite constellation would be used to detect, identify and monitor vessels in real time in support of the maritime industry. It would also provide significant space-based information for disaster management and emergency response by using remote-sensing data and Earth observation satellites to develop multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster impact analysis for monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters.

55. South Africa was proud to have facilitated the discussions that led to the adoption of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, whose implementation should help to bridge the space technology divide between developed and emerging countries. Space activities such as Earth observation, satellite communications, navigation, space weather monitoring and space exploration contributed to sustainable development and a wide spectrum of national priorities, including job creation and poverty reduction. South Africa had promulgated laws, such as the Astronomy Geographic Advantage Act, and regulations to preserve pristine environments for radio and optical astronomy. The Space Affairs Act of 1993 was being revised to take advantage of the fast-growing area of space technologies and to strengthen the corresponding legislative framework. South Africa urged all Member States to actively participate in maintaining a multilateral approach towards outer space.

56. **Ms. Hanlumyuang** (Thailand) said that space was a global commons, and must therefore be used and explored exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the betterment of humanity. Her country's commitment to the peaceful uses of outer space was underpinned by respect for international law and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space. Thailand had benefited from space-based services and technologies in promoting its sustainable development, improving the livelihood of its people and ensuring human security for all. As a concrete example, the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency of Thailand had been applying satellite technologies to map and monitor crops with a view to enhancing food security. In collaboration with ESCAP, that crop monitoring platform was being shared with neighbouring countries, thus contributing to greater food security in the region and strengthening South-South cooperation. In addition, through the Agency's geospatial information system, Thailand was strengthening its early warning capacities for disaster risk reduction, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

57. Thailand would continue to support the important work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Office for Outer Space Affairs in strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Striving to realize the "Space2030" Agenda should be a priority, as the Office had estimated that space-enabled geolocation and Earth observation would benefit 40 per cent of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 targets.

58. The continuing increase in access to space, whether by Member States or private actors, called for everyone to do their part in ensuring safety and sustainability in its peaceful uses. Thailand supported continued international cooperation and action in mitigating the effects of space debris, including the implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. Other relevant international instruments should be developed to ensure long-term sustainability in the peaceful uses of outer space, and it would be useful for the Legal Subcommittee to continue its role in that regard. Thailand was drafting a space affairs bill, which would be aimed at supporting, regulating and developing space affairs and activities in a responsible manner.

59. Capacity-building was important to ensure that the vast benefits and future potential of outer space could be enjoyed by all countries and peoples. Thailand therefore encouraged closer international cooperation on the sharing of knowledge related to space and its exploration, which could include training in areas such as space law. In line with the aspirations of the "Space2030" Agenda, Thailand would continue to work with all stakeholders, such as the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, on capacity-building and research.

60. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that his country recognized the common interest of all humankind and the sovereign right of all States to participate in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes that benefited human development. The Outer Space

Treaty had a fundamental role to play in ensuring that outer space was used only for peaceful purposes and in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. While the Treaty was the cornerstone of the international legal framework governing activities in outer space, the international community needed to develop common solutions to address new challenges. Argentina was working in the field of space law to address the new challenges arising from the development of space science and technology and the emergence of private sector actors, while making efforts to ensure that all countries had safe and sustainable access to such technology and space.

61. Argentina was in favour of the negotiation, under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament, of a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space. In the meantime, international measures to ensure transparency and promote trust with regard to outer space activities should be adopted.

62. His country's space programme, which involved the local development of satellites and satellite launchers, was entirely peaceful. Its two Earth observation satellites, launched in 2018 and 2020, generated data that could be used for scientific and productive purposes in such areas as agriculture. Those data were combined with data from Italian satellites as part of the Italian-Argentine Satellite System for the Management of Emergencies within the framework of cooperation with the Italian Space Agency. The data on emergencies were also shared with UN-SPIDER and the working group on disasters of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, as well as other scientific projects at the national and international levels. The successful mission was not only a milestone for Argentina but also demonstrated how outer space could be used to promote development. A forthcoming collaboration mission with Brazil, which would make a major contribution to ocean and coastal studies, was in the final design phases, with a projected launch date in 2024.

63. Argentina was pleased that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had supported including the issue of space and world health as a standing item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee from 2023. Argentina, through the Mario Gulich Institute for Advanced Space Studies, had extensive experience in telemedicine and landscape epidemiology, the latter of which involved spatial and temporal modelling of the environments in which diseases develop in order to produce dynamic risk mapping. Since its establishment in 1997, the Institute had been involved in a pioneering programme to improve access to high-quality health services in rural areas. Since 1998, it had been involved in research into diseases such as dengue and into environmental emergencies. In 2014, the National Commission on Space Activities, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Planning had issued a joint publication on the use of geospatial tools for public health in landscape epidemiology. Argentina also had a cooperation programme with the European Space Agency, whose aim was to trial telemedicine devices. The above-mentioned initiatives were crucial to the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being.

64. **Mr. Kusano** (Japan) said that Japan would continue to contribute to multilateral forums and leverage its experience and technology for the benefit of all. Japan welcomed the achievements of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its ongoing discussions on ensuring the safety, security, sustainability and stability of outer space. The Office for Outer Space Affairs was uniquely situated to enhance international cooperation and capacity-building. In view of the growing number of space actors, it was important that each country conducted its space activities in a responsible manner, in accordance with the existing normative framework. Principles, declarations and guidelines on the peaceful uses of outer space developed by the Committee and adopted or endorsed by the General Assembly represented an important complement to the existing treaties. The expanding scope of space activities required the development of a further set of principles and best practices to enhance the governance of outer space.

65. Japan was committed to supporting the work of the Working Group on Space Resources, which had agreed on its methods of work and a five-year workplan, and the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, which had reached consensus on its terms of reference, methods of work and workplan.

66. As a leading spacefaring nation, Japan continued to promote space cooperation for the benefit of all humankind. Accordingly, collaboration with international partners was a key component in its space exploration and science missions. Japan had been participating in the International Space Station since its inception. The Japanese Experiment Module of the International Space Station was a remarkable example of international cooperation that provided emerging space nations with opportunities for small satellite deployment. In October 2020, Japan had signed the Artemis Accords on the Principles for Cooperation in the Civil Exploration and Use of the Moon, Mars, Comets, and Asteroids for Peaceful Purposes, which would contribute to the governance of civil space exploration and the peaceful

uses of outer space. In December 2020, the Government had signed a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation on the civil lunar gateway with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States. In May 2022, at a summit meeting, the leaders of Japan and the United States had announced the progress made in collaboration on the Artemis programme and reaffirmed their shared intention to include a Japanese astronaut in the gateway and in lunar surface missions.

67. In December 2020, the Japanese asteroid explorer Hayabusa-2 had returned to Earth, and its capsule carrying samples of the asteroid Ryugu had been retrieved in cooperation with Australia. Samples were being analysed by the Hayabusa-2 science team and some 40 research groups from around the world. In 2024, Japan would launch the Martian Moons Exploration mission, during which samples would be collected from Phobos in collaboration with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the French National Centre for Space Studies, the German Aerospace Center and the European Space Agency.

68. In the light of the diversification of space activities in the Asia-Pacific region, there was growing interest in space policy and law. In response, Japan had been involved in community-building, including through the submission to the sixtieth session of the Legal Subcommittee of a joint report on the status of national space legislation, prepared in collaboration with Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam. The report had been prepared as part of the National Space Legislation Initiative, under the framework of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, with a view to contributing to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/74. In 2021, following the success of the first phase of its activities, the second phase of the activities under the Initiative had begun, with new members from New Zealand, Singapore and Türkiye. Japan was also cooperating with the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the Space Law for New Space Actors project to support capacity-building in Asia-Pacific countries regarding the drafting of national space legislation and policy, as well as to raise awareness of the existing normative framework.

69. **Mr. Kolesnikov** (Russian Federation) said that his country, as a pioneer in outer space and one of the leading outer space powers, had consistently advocated the preservation of outer space as a peaceful environment and the heritage of all humankind. Two significant space-related anniversaries had recently been celebrated: the sixty-fifth anniversary of the launch by the Soviet Union of the first ever artificial Earth satellite on 4 October; and the fifty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty, which remained the cornerstone of international outer space law, on 10 October. The Russian Federation was in favour of the peaceful use of outer space on an equal and non-discriminatory basis and trusted that the international community would make every effort to achieve that noble goal.

70. The role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be strengthened. It was a time-tested platform for regulating a broad range of issues related to the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The Committee must maintain its unique role based on the equal participation of all its members in discussions and decision-making in accordance with the immutable principle of consensus.

71. His delegation welcomed the fruitful work conducted within the framework of the sixty-fifth session of the Committee and looked forward to the consensus adoption of the draft resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which reflected the results of the Committee's activities over the year. It was important to avoid the politicization of discussions on the peaceful exploration of outer space and to avoid attempts under any pretext to impose individual or group ambitions as the only way to resolve pressing matters in outer space activities. Unilateral approaches to building an outer space rules-based order were unacceptable.

72. Attempts to duplicate the functions of the Committee on parallel platforms were counterproductive. The Russian Federation was open to constructive cooperation with all participants in outer space activities. It maintained cooperation ties with traditional partner countries and was developing cooperation in the field of space activities with Brazil, India, China and South Africa and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The agreement on integrated flights signed by the State Space Corporation "Roscosmos" and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States in July 2022 was being successfully implemented, as reflected in the two launches to the International Space Station that had taken place in September and October.

73. **Ms. Nguyen** Hong Nhat (Viet Nam) said that space had proved to be a useful tool in fostering international collaboration. The exploration and use of outer space should take place for the benefit of humankind and in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations treaties. All countries, regardless of their development level, should have universal and equal access to outer space. In recent

decades, space technologies had supported the development of Member States, with applications in such areas as satellite communications, broadcasting, farming, weather forecasting and environmental monitoring. Other useful economic, scientific and social applications continued to be discovered, which could also contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In order to maintain that progress, it was vital to prevent an arms race and the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space.

74. Since 2006, Viet Nam had paid great attention to space technologies as a means to promote its socioeconomic development and, in 2021, the Prime Minister had approved a national strategy for research and applications of space technology for the period until 2030. In addition, Viet Nam had been playing an active role in the region and had enhanced cooperation with partners to develop space technology and its applications. Fostering exchange of information and enhancing cooperation on space science and technology was a driver of sustainable development.

The meeting rose at noon.