

Finland's Statement in the 61st session of the Technical and Scientific Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Agenda Item 11 – Long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Finland welcomes with appreciation the substantial work of the working group on long-term sustainability of space activities, following the adoption of the LTS guidelines in 2019. We also warmly welcome the workshop to be organized during this session.

The themes of sustainable use of outer space and sustainable growth of the space sector, in particular the NewSpace economy, are key priorities of the Finnish space policy. We consider COPUOS the correct multilateral forum to address topics relevant to safe and sustainable space activities.

Addressing space debris is critically important to the long-term sustainability of space activities. The matter is of global concern and needs to be tackled at both national and international levels.

We are pleased that space debris mitigation is becoming a recurrent theme in national space legislations. This shows the willingness of States to adhere to the respective non-legally binding instruments and the principles contained therein. We however note that there is room for further improvement in increasing compliance with space debris mitigation guidelines. Development and proliferation of Active Debris Removal methods and space debris mitigation measures are important to ensure that future generations retain access to critical orbits.

Finland continues to evaluate its current level of implementation of the LTS guidelines and identify ways of furthering adherence thereof. There is a national regulatory framework in place that has been updated in 2023 to better reflect changing conditions. We remain committed to continuous improvement. Finland has joined the European Union Space Surveillance and Tracking Consortium in 2022, and is in the process of establishing a national Space Situational Awareness Center.

According to the Finnish Act on Space Activities, avoidance of unnecessary environmental harm and mitigation of space debris are set out as conditions for authorization. This requirement is further complemented by a specific section on the topic. Operators shall, in accordance with recognized international guidelines, seek to ensure that the activities in outer space do not generate space debris.

Finally, Madam Chair,

We consider that alongside national implementation, international implementation of voluntary instruments remains key for their success. In addition to practical implementation, we consider it important to engage in international discussions on policy and legal issues. These exchanges are valuable as they can support coherent development of the norms contained in the LTS guidelines through unified reporting practices on national implementation.

In the context of the LTS working group, we are looking to participate actively in designing ways to improve normative development through reporting of national progress. We thank those delegations who have proposed methods and reported on their own national implementation.

This concludes our statement. Thank you Madam Chair and thank you distinguished Delegates for your time and attention.