



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

Finland's Statement in the 62nd session of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 20 March – 31 March 2023

Agenda Item 3 – General exchange of views

Thank you Madame Chair,

First, allow me to reiterate our delegation's full support to you Madame Chair, and take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to you for your leadership during this hybrid meeting. We also wish to thank Acting Director Niklas Hedman and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for their support in organising and conducting the meeting.

Finland recognizes the importance of the Legal Subcommittee as an indispensable forum for the exchange of views on legal aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation in this regard. We welcome Guatemala and Uzbekistan as the new States members of the Committee.

Madame Chair, and distinguished Delegates,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union (EU).

COPUOS exists to improve conditions for expanding international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The unjustified invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation continues to severely hurt our common efforts in this regard. Finland stands in full solidarity with Ukraine and continues to firmly support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, self-determination and territorial integrity.

Madame Chair,

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. Finland is particularly interested in small satellite activities. There are currently 22 non-governmental satellites registered in Finland's registry of space objects, all of which have been launched since 2017 when Finland became a space-faring nation.

The Finnish Act on Space Activities has been in force since 2018. It was amended for the first time in February 2023, when new regulations on satellite remote sensing entered into force. The new legislation aims at ensuring national and international security concerning distribution of remote sensing data and creating a predictable and legally clear operating environment to promote the growth of the sector.

Madame Chair,

The issue concerning safety and sustainability of space activities is a growing concern to all space actors and the society. Finland considers the development of a global Space Traffic Management (STM) regime timely and essential, as it could contribute towards creation, development and implementation of common international rules that take into consideration the rapid changes in the space sector. An effective space situational awareness capacity, including space weather, space surveillance and tracking and near earth objects capabilities, is vital in supporting these aims. Finland joined the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking Consortium in 2022 and is investigating the establishment of a national Space Situational Awareness Center in order to further develop our capacity in this area. Space Traffic Management is an interdisciplinary matter

and encompasses regulatory, technical and operational elements at different levels. We are pleased to see the continued progress in the European discussion on Space Traffic Management, as well as the multilateral exchange in the Legal Subcommittee.

We are also pleased to see space debris mitigation as a recurrent theme in national legislation, showing the willingness of States to adhere to the respective non-legally binding instruments and the principles contained therein. For instance, the Finnish Act on Space Activities takes into account avoidance of unnecessary environmental harm and mitigation of space debris that are set out as conditions for authorisation. Finland has also begun the process of evaluating its current level of implementation of the guidelines for the long-term sustainability (LTS) of outer space activities and identifying ways of furthering adherence thereto. We consider it important to engage in international discussion on policy and legal issues to support coherent development of the norms contained in the LTS guidelines through unified reporting practices on national implementation, and welcome with appreciation the efforts made with this regard.

Madame Chair,

Finland is of the opinion that exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources are best to be coordinated at international, multilateral level for the peaceful and sustainable exploration and use of outer space, that is carried out in accordance with international law and in the benefit and interests of all States. Accordingly, we welcome with appreciation the establishment of the Working Group under the Agenda Item of Exploration, Exploitation and Utilization of Space Resources in the Legal Subcommittee and the agreement on its mandate.

Finally, Madame Chair,

Finland believes that the United Nations treaties on outer space, together with the UN General Assembly sets of principles as well as other related documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly form the cornerstones of international space law. Finland also believes that having binding guidance at international level for the conduct of space activities brings predictability and creates conditions for tackling global problems.

Thank you Madame Chair and distinguished Delegates.