



Secure World Foundation
Exchange of Views Statement
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
June 2017

Mr. Chairman, the Secure World Foundation expresses its congratulations to you, and to the leadership and staff of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, for the high level of visibility that OOSA has helped to focus on the crucial importance that transparency and building confidence plays in current and future activities in space.

As the Secure World Foundation undertakes its labors—as a voice of civil society here in COPUOS, and as a facilitator of discussions on space governance around the world—the level of attention your office helps focus on existing concerns over the space domain strengthens the salience and necessity of our work.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, our statements to this year's sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee have detailed numerous Secure World Foundation activities that have supported the critically important mission and work of COPUOS, along with other elements of the United Nations system, and indeed with the broad community of space participants in advancing space sustainability and the peaceful uses of outer space.

In the time since those statements were delivered, we have continued our work as a member of The Hague Space Resources Working Group, co-hosted the Space Security Conference in Geneva with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Simons Foundation of Canada, and participated in the meeting on the Future of Civil Space, organized by the National Academies in the United States. As a participating organization in the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), we participated at the 2017 Work Programme Symposium and the International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment, both held in Tshwane, South Africa.

Additionally, members of the Secure World Foundation team have actively participated in the Space Security Index Working Group and the Space Resources Roundtable in Montreal, the European Space Debris Conference in Darmstadt (where we organized a side event to explore best practices for active debris removal for which there is now a full report published on our web site), the Space 2.0 conference in California, and the Space for Global Maritime Awareness Workshop in Lisbon, Portugal.

We are also pleased to report that close cooperation continues with NGOs that are also permanent observers of this Committee. For example, we have actively collaborated with SGAC in support of the 2017 Fusion Forum and in the planning of the Space Generation Congress, and we have worked closely with the International Space University to contribute lecturers and curriculum content for their Space Studies Program taking place this summer in cooperation with the Institute of Technology in Cork, Ireland.

SWF has also contributed to national discussions on oversight and control of non-governmental and commercial space activities, including submitting two letters to the US Congress on recent hearings on regulation of the US commercial space sector.

UNISPACE+50

Looking forward, we anticipate that many of our activities will contribute to our on-going partnership with the Office for Outer Space Affairs in support of the High Level Forum and its work in preparation for UNISPACE+50, now only a year away.

As we have undertaken this work, we have drawn inspiration from the thematic priorities this Committee adopted last year at its 59th Session.

Global Partnership in space exploration and innovation

Pursuing the first of those priorities, we have sought to advance **“Global partnership in space exploration and innovation”** through closer engagement with the commercial space sector while also working with governments on policy challenges presented by the rapid acceleration of technological advances and applications. In this context, we have sought to provide leadership in the discussion of on-orbit servicing and the complex issues that surround it.

Legal Regime for Outer Space

Concerning the **“Legal regime of outer space and global space governance,”** our work with The Hague Space Resources Governance Working Group has already been cited. The positive response to our Handbook for New Actors in Space also gives us reason to believe that this volume represents a significant contribution to this thematic priority, as do the several activities we have organized this year in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty.

Space Objects and Events

We are recognized as an important advocate for the thematic priority of **“enhanced information exchange on space objects and events,”** and have actively collaborated with Advanced Maui Optical and Space (AMOS) surveillance and technologies conference and International Scientific and Optical Network (ISON) over the years in pursuing that goal. Additionally, staff publications focused on this issue have stimulated important discussion and thinking.

Space Weather

Fulfilling our commitment to this Committee to speak about its work *to* civil society, and not merely to share with COPUOS perspectives *from* civil society, we have cooperated with subject area experts to advance understanding about the need this Committee has articulated with the thematic pillar for an **“International framework for space weather services.”** In May, we cooperated with the US State Department and the Italian Embassy to the United States to present a program in Washington, DC on “Space Weather as a Global Challenge.” That same month, we were an active participant in the Space Weather Workshop held in our headquarters city of Broomfield, Colorado and close to the US National Solar Observatory and the University of Colorado’s Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics. And later this month, SWF will co-sponsor, with the National Space Weather Partnership, the 2017 Space Weather Enterprise Forum in Washington, DC, in order to continue these important conversations.

Additional themes

In recent years, cooperating with the Committee on Earth Observing Satellites, we have had the opportunity to actually integrate two of the remaining priorities, **“International cooperation towards low-emission and resilient societies”** and **“capacity-building for the twenty-first century.”**

Working with local partners like CRECTEALC in Mexico, RCMCRD in Kenya, SANSA in South Africa, and ICIMOD in Nepal, we have co-organized capacity building workshops designed to make publicly available Earth observation data more useful to local operators seeking to use it to protect communities from flooding and other wild water risks.

All of these activities represent more than just hard work and commitment. They also testify to the relationship we feel with this Committee and the effort of the UN system to advance the use of space for peaceful purposes, and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

That relationship will be fully visible across a broad spectrum of our work in the coming year, but nowhere will it be more evident than in our support for the HLF and for UNISPACE+50. I believe that we share with the members of this Committee a strong belief that the agenda to be set by UNISPACE+50 will undoubtedly cover the most dynamic 12 years of a space age that has already set new standards for dynamism. For the High Level Forum and subsequent UNISPACE+50 to be a success, maximum participation and engagement from all COPUOS Member States and from a broad cross section of civil society will be crucial.

Much has been achieved in the sixty years since Sputnik first showed us that attaining Earth orbit was within the capacity of human engineering. Much has changed in the forty-eight years since we first held our breath as two brave men completed the first human landing on the Moon. In fact, given the dizzying pace of change that has now gripped the space sector and the cascade of discovery emerging from our space probes and engineering laboratories, we can say with certainty that much has changed just since the beginning of 2017.

UNISPACE+50 seeks to set the tone of discussion and the program of work that will guide the development of space policy to the year 2030. In that same year, the world will be called to account for our progress on the SDGs. In the best of all worlds, the work we will have done advancing peaceful uses of outer space will have contributed greatly to advancing sustainable development.

To accomplish this, we will need vision and foresight to be sure, but we will also need flexibility and an openness to ideas worthy of the challenges they seek to meet.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, we believe that this Committee has the capacity to succeed in this difficult environment. We continue to pledge our efforts to advance its work and values as represented in the thematic priorities and in the guidance that will emerge from next year's UNISPACE+50 Conference.

We look forward to continuing to benefit from the knowledge and insight made possible through the privilege you have accorded us to attend your proceedings as a permanent observer. We remain ready and willing to be a resource in your work.

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