

**Opening Remarks by Dr Peter Martinez for the  
United Nations Space Law Technical Advisory Mission to Costa Rica  
6 November 2023**

Your Excellencies,

Minister, Paula Bogantes Zamora, Minister of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications,

Ambassador Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Vice-Minister of Multilateral Affairs,

Ambassador Charles Hernández Viale, Director General Ad Interim for Foreign Policy,

Mr Manuel Mora Marín, Director of Research and Technological Development

Ms Aarti Holla-Maini, Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs,

Distinguished participants in this event, colleagues and friends.

It is my great pleasure to address a few remarks to you on the occasion of the start of the technical program of this United Nations Space Law Technical Advisory Mission to Costa Rica.

This activity is being carried out under the auspices of the Space Law for New Space Actors project of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

I am proud to say that Secure World Foundation has been a supporter of this important initiative of OOSA since its inception in 2019, both financially and through providing our experts to participate in Technical Advisory Missions such as this one.

We believe that capacity-building activities such as this contribute to the progressive development and codification of space law to ensure that outer space remains a domain that is open for peaceful exploration and use, by all nations.

The field of space law, which was a niche area of international law for many years, is rapidly growing in importance as the space arena grows.

Whatever metric one uses, be it the aggregate dollar amount of the global space economy, the number of countries or companies involved in space activities, or number of active satellites in space, the numbers are all going up – in some cases dramatically.

We are seeing a much greater number and diversity of space actors and the emergence of new kinds of space activities not envisaged when the existing international treaties were developed in the 1960s and 1970s.

To this, we must add the growing importance of space security, which is now the concern of practically all countries that are critically reliant on space infrastructure for their national prosperity, safety and security.

Therefore, it is important for countries to increase their capacity for space governance, both at the multilateral level, and at the national level. These Technical Advisory Missions aim to build capacity in both of these dimensions.

Starting at the multilateral level, after a hiatus of several decades, we are now entering a period of reinvigorated space rule-making. A new rules-based order in space is being created, building on the established order, but this time, with more active engagement by many more nations. The challenges posed by the rapid growth of space activities are intrinsically multilateral in nature and so it is important that as many nations as possible engage in these multilateral processes that are shaping the future of space governance today.

Turning to the national level, it is important to build national regulatory capacity so that countries are fully capable of discharging their international obligations under the various treaties that they have ratified.

In particular, Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty places the responsibility on States to provide the authorization and continuing supervision of the space activities of non-governmental entities under their jurisdiction.

In the past, most of the focus of implementing this Article VI obligation has been on the authorization piece, but now with the emergence of commercial actors developing sustained operations in space, and with the much more congested space environment, there will have to be a much greater emphasis on matters such as registration and the continuing supervision of space activities.

These are all topics included in the agenda of this workshop.

In closing, I want to say that we see from the high level of official representation here today a clear signal of the importance that the government of Costa Rica attaches to space governance.

I would also like to take this opportunity to note the statement made by Costa Rica in the United Nations 1<sup>st</sup> Committee on October 19<sup>th</sup> affirming that Costa Rica joins those countries that have expressed their commitment not to conduct destructive tests of direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles and thus avoid their widespread and irreversible impact on the outer space environment.

This makes Costa Rica the first Latin American country to make this commitment envisaged in UN General Assembly Resolution 77/41. It helps to establish this as an emerging international norm to preserve the space environment from the proliferation of orbital debris and is a practical measure to prevent outer space from becoming a domain of conflict.

The wide-spread adoption of such voluntary non-binding commitments can also provide the basis for future legally binding instruments, thus strengthening the rule of law in outer space, which is the ultimate goal of these Technical Advisory Missions in Space Law.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations over the next three days.

Thank you.