

Agenda Item 4: General Exchange of Views

Republic of Korea

UN COPUOS Legal Subcommittee, 63rd Session, 16 April, 2024

Mr. Chair,

First, I would like to extend my government's warm congratulations on your election. The Republic of Korea looks forward to your guidance for the coming years and assures you of its continued support and cooperation.

We also extend our gratitude to Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini and the Secretariat for their tireless efforts in preparing for this session. We also thank the outgoing Chair, Ms. Nomfuneko Majaja, for her excellent leadership amid challenging global circumstances.

Mr. Chair,

As a spacefaring nation party to the four United Nations treaties on outer space, we believe the treaties form the legal foundation for the peaceful, safe, and sustainable exploration and use of outer space. We also believe the treaties will remain relevant despite dramatic changes,

such as the increase of spacefaring nations and private actors and rapid advancements in space technology.

In this respect, the Republic of Korea deems it crucial that the Legal Subcommittee acts as the primary forum for ensuring good faith implementation of existing treaties and further developing norms with the goal of constructing a rules-based order for outer space activities.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to take this opportunity to announce the establishment of the Korea AeroSpace Administration (KASA).

With the Special Act on the Establishment and Operation of the Korea Aerospace Administration and relevant legislation passed, KASA is now in its final phase of opening in May.

KASA will be the central administrative agency overseeing space policy, research and development, industry promotion, space safety, and international cooperation. In particular, KASA will focus on identifying collaborative projects in space exploration, space science, and aerospace research in partnership with leading space agencies worldwide. Additionally, KASA would aim to support

emerging nations in their efforts to develop space capabilities, thus fostering economic cooperation and mutual growth.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to highlight some of the latest achievements in our space activities. Last year, the Republic of Korea successfully launched Nuri, our homegrown rocket, for the third time. Additionally, Danuri, the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter, not only completed its first mission year successfully but also received an extension of another two years.

This year, we will embark on developing a lunar lander, which we aim to launch in 2032. It has yet to be decided as to what payloads the lunar lander will carry, but there is a high possibility that the mission will be able to demonstrate In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) technology.

As humankind is about to embark on the exploration, exploitation, and utilization of space resources, the Republic of Korea recognizes that it is crucial to establish effective international governance of such activities. With that in mind, we intend to actively participate in the work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities.

In relation to this, last year, we hosted the International Workshop on Space Resources, pooling knowledge and insights from international experts on the science, technology, business, and policy aspects of space resources. We plan to share the results of this workshop through a technical presentation later this session.

Also, we have submitted our views on the mandate and purpose of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities prior to this session.

Mr. Chair,

Please allow me to share with you the Republic of Korea's commitment to mitigating space debris. Having adopted the "Recommendation on the Development and Operation of Spacecraft for the Purpose of Mitigating Space Debris" in 2020, we have continued to advance debris removal technology. Recently, we began outlining a plan to develop a small satellite by 2027 capable of capturing and removing space debris.

Mr. Chair,

On a final note, I wish to bring your kind attention to the events the Republic of Korea will be hosting this July - the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Space Environmental Services Organization (ISES) General Assembly - through which we wish to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to global space exploration and research cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea attaches the utmost importance to this Subcommittee's role in strengthening the international legal regime on space. We will always align ourselves with the Subcommittee's endeavors to that end. For this session, my delegation is ready to provide full support and looks forward to vibrant discussions that will bear fruit for us all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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