

Kingdom of the Netherlands – Agenda-item 6 Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chair, distinguished delegations

Mr Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a party to all five UN Space Treaties, and would invite all States to also ratify all five, including the Moon Agreement.

With the increase in activities in Outer Space, and also the diversity of those activities, registration and the sharing of information, as part of the implementation of the five UN treaties is becoming increasingly important. We may be reminded of the guiding principle of cooperation and mutual assistance, the obligation to conduct activities with due regard, and of the obligation to provide the Secretary-General of the UN, the public and the international scientific community of information to the greatest extent feasible and practicable of the nature, conduct, locations and results of outer space activities.

We may also be mindful of the risk of collision, and of other accidents in outer space, that may be avoided, or mitigated, with sufficient transparency. As stated before, my Government considers that we must, with urgency, address the proper registration and monitoring of all outer space activities, not just the launch.

We also remain convinced that registration would benefit from harmonisation. For that purpose, we should develop a more accessible, perhaps electronic, process, for instance through the use of a template or a form that could be used by States for the sharing of information on their outer space activities, including activities other than the bringing into orbit of a space object. These would include in-orbit servicing and other post-launch activities. The creation of a platform for registration, by means of a template, is a pragmatic step that could be taken now and would benefit the space community. In our view, this could also be part of the work of the working group, as part of its work plan.

As to the specific practice under Article XI of the OST of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I wish to recall that my Government has informed the Sub-committee before of its understanding that while a State has responsibility under article VI of the Outer Space Treaty, it does not mean that that State is liable under article VII or under the Liability Convention for damage caused by a space object owned or operated by an enterprise registered in that State, where the enterprise had requested that the launch should take place from a State other than the enterprise's State. Liability in such an instance can be appropriately allocated in a bilateral agreement between the enterprise's State and the State which had launched the space object. Thus, the Netherlands will notify UNOOSA under Article XI of space activities for which it is not the launching State, nor therefore the State of registration. This is to ensure maximum transparency, even if the Netherlands is not the State of Registration.

To conclude, my delegation welcomes a discussion on the need to improve the implementation of Articles IX and XI of the OST, with a view to enhancing transparency and improving the sustainable use of outer space.

I thank you for your attention.