



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL  
USES OF OUTER SPACE: 63<sup>rd</sup> SESSION**

**DEFINITION AND DELIMITATION OF OUTER SPACE**

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**Thank you, Chairperson,**

South Africa appreciates the opportunity to make a statement on agenda item 7 (a) on the definition and delimitation of outer space.

Firstly, we reaffirm our support and commitment towards finding an amicable way forward on the ongoing efforts and debates regarding the definition and delimitation of outer space. These efforts are crucial to furthering the mandate of the Legal Subcommittee.

**Chairperson,**

The definition and delimitation of outer space cuts across a myriad of space-related sectors. Due to its interconnected nature, there should be closer collaboration between the Legal Subcommittee and other relevant bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). In this regard, my delegation would support the establishment of a structure comprising representatives of UNOOSA and ICAO to effectively address the complexities of outerspace governance

**Chairperson,**

South Africa is proud to report that its space agency, the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), launched a regional 24/7 operational space weather centre that provides real-time space weather forecasts that are transmitted to South Africa and the rest of the continent. This 24/7 network has developed advanced space weather skills for the region and provides real-time space weather forecasts and alerts for telecommunications companies and satellite operators, airlines and air traffic control agencies - including sub-orbital flights. South Africa is seeking to enhance the safety and efficiency of these industries and foster innovation and regional cooperation through the dissemination of real-time forecasts.

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**Chairperson ,**

The rapid advancement of scientific and technological capabilities, such as sub-orbital flights for space tourism, introduces new complexities regarding the delineation of airspace and outer space and the applicable legal frameworks. As these activities operate at the boundary between airspace and outer space, it is thus critical that we arrive at a mutually consensual definition and delimitation of outer space to ensure safety and facilitate the responsible management of these activities.

This is a crucial legal issue with significant practical implications for various activities, including aviation, sub-orbital flights, and space operations. Determining who sets the standards for these activities and who bears the ultimate responsibility for their safe operation also becomes paramount.

**Chairperson,**

South Africa, through its Ministry of Transport adheres to the provisions of the Chicago Convention that differentiates between the civilian airspace parameters and related airspace matters, taking cognisance of the military-restricted airspace versus the so-called flexible airspace via harmonised planning to ensure the safe and efficient management of airspace for both traditional aviation and space-related activities.

In South Africa, the upper airspace, which is locked above a certain suggested flight level should be able to accommodate the envisaged sub-orbital flights, with some level of flexibility.

In conclusion, **Chairperson,** South Africa reiterates its commitment to continue supporting discussions under this important agenda item and collaborative efforts amongst all relevant stakeholders to advance legal certainty and uniformity around the conduct of space activities to promote responsible and sustainable practices in outerspace.

**I thank you.**