



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

**Finland's Statement in the 57th session of the Technical and Scientific Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Vienna, 3 – 14 February 2020**

Agenda Item 4 – General exchange of views

Thank you Madame Chair, Good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate you on your election and assure you our delegation's full support during your chairmanship. We would also like to express our gratitude to Ms. Pontsho Maruping of South Africa for her excellent leadership over the past two years. We thank the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Director Simonetta di Pippo and the secretariat for the excellent organisation of this meeting. We join the other delegations in welcoming Singapore, Ruanda and Dominican Republic as the new state members of the Committee.

We recognize the importance of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as an indispensable forum for the exchange of views on scientific and technical aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation in this regard, and wish to actively contribute in the work of this session.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union, and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

In the autumn of 2019, Finland held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Presidency priorities of fostering the European leadership in tackling climate change and ensuring sustainable growth were promoted also in the field of space policy. This included promoting space solutions for the Arctic, increasing the understanding of sustainable use of space, and enhancing the New Space Economy. The European Union Council conclusions on Space Solutions for a Sustainable Arctic, approved by the Competitiveness Council in November, stressed that space can act as a true enabler in the Arctic, ensuring economically, socially and environmentally sustainable growth in the area. In relation to the key priorities of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, in collaboration with Finnish partners, organised the European Space Week in Helsinki on 3–5 December 2019. The event was a great success bringing together more than 700 representatives of companies, research organisations and space administration to discuss the European space policy.

International cooperation forms a firm fundament of Finnish space activities. Finland is a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since 1995, The Finnish industry and research organisations participate actively in European Space Agency's programmes, in particular Earth Observation, Navigation, and Advanced Research in Telecommunications Systems (ARTES) as well as novel cross sectoral areas of satellite 5G, autonomous transport and cyber security. Finland is also an active member of the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), and the European Southern Observatory (ESO). In this framework, also the EU Space Programme and bilateral collaborations continue to have an important role in the Finnish space programme.

Madame Chair,

Finland welcomes the adoption of the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities by the Committee, and the subsequent endorsement by the General Assembly, with great appreciation. The themes of sustainable use of outer space and sustainable growth of the space sector, in particular the NewSpace economy, are the key priorities of the Finnish space policy, and we consider that the Committee with its Subcommittees form the right multilateral forum to address topics relevant to safe and sustainable space activities.

Finland acknowledges the UN space treaties as the cornerstones of international space law forming the primary international legal source for the governance of outer space activities. We note that together with the UN space treaties and other international instruments, the non-legally binding instruments relating to sustainable use of outer space support the underlying objectives of protection of the outer space environment, the Earth, and the atmosphere, as well as risk limitation and long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Finland recognises the importance of space science and technology for the achievement of the goals and targets set by these regimes.

To make a voluntary instrument effective in its objective of steering behaviour at all levels, action needs to be taken, internationally and nationally. Finland has started to work with the national implementation of the adopted guidelines, and will report on that in more detail under agenda item 13. We note that the concept of national implementation does not only foresee national policy or legislative actions. Many of the guidelines are to be implemented internationally with other actors. In this respect, the Finnish delegation will make a technical presentation tomorrow under the agenda item of space weather to highlight one such example in the implementation of guideline B.6 on “Sharing operational space weather data and forecasts”. This presentation will highlight the success of an international PECASUS consortium headquartered in Finland, providing space weather services, including information on the solar activity in the near space, used for example for the purpose of ensuring flight safety.

In addition to practical implementation, we consider that it is important to engage in international discussion on policy and legal issues in relation to national implementation to support the coherent development of the norms contained in the LTS guidelines. Here we wish to highlight an informal workshop held by the Finnish delegation together with the Swiss delegation in Paris in November 2019, with the aim of exchanging with our European colleagues, ESA and EU on this multidimensional and important topic.

In this regard, we are pleased that a dedicated working group dedicated to the long-term sustainability will be established, and we wish to take thank the delegations that have put forward their candidates for the bureau to oversee the work of the working group, as well as those who have provided their proposals for its terms of reference and method of work. Finland gives its full support in the process and intends to actively cooperate with other delegations during this session in forming consensus on the composition of the bureau, and the goals and methods of work in accordance with the mandate of the working group.

Finally Madame Chair,

The Finnish space activities have emerged and increased in rapid pace, there are currently seven satellites registered in the Finnish Registry of Space Objects. All of these have been launched in the past two years. These satellites include both missions by scientific institutions as well as commercial companies. Prompted by these new space activities, Finland has a national space legislation in place since 2018, establishing an authorization and supervision process for national space activities as well as a national space object registry.

The objective of the national legislation is not only to ensure compliance with State's international obligations but also to create a predictable and legally transparent environment for national space activities and to ensure the safety of the activities as well as the sustainable use of outer space. To highlight this latter aspect, requirements for mitigation of space debris and minimizing adverse impacts of space missions to the Earth, atmosphere, and the outer space, are included in the Act. Finland monitors the development of international best practices and space debris mitigation instruments, and has implemented a continuous review cycle to ensure that the legislation continues to reflect these in a meaningful and effective manner. In relation to the above, Finland considers that international cooperation, coordination, and information sharing with regards to all aspects of small satellite activities, and related services is key to enable reaching the goals of both sustainable and safe use of outer space.

The national space strategy of Finland was revised in 2018, setting up concrete measures to promote the growth and employment of the space sector and defines ambitious targets to be reached by 2025. The national Space Committee is systematically monitoring the implementation of the strategy operating as an advisory body under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, bringing together the perspectives of various administrative branches. The Committee has a full-time secretariat nominated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, acting as the Space Office of Finland.

We wish everyone an interesting and fruitful session. Thank you Madame Chair.