

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL STATEMENT

to be delivered by
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reports submitted on national activities

(Optional: Merci, Madame la Présidente) / Thank you, Madam Chair,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the COPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) for the period 2020-2021. I am confident that under your able leadership, the STSC will continue having productive and meaningful discussions on the most pressing issues in outer space. I also wish to thank the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, led by Director Simonetta Di Pippo, for the excellent arrangements for this meeting.

The Philippines warmly welcomes the Committee's new members – the Dominican Republic, Rwanda and Singapore – and is always pleased to see fellow developing countries join the Committee's roster. In this regard, the Philippines underscores the need to ensure greater accessibility of outer space for the benefit of **ALL** humankind, without prejudice to a country's economic development or scientific advancement, especially through capacity-building.

Madam Chair,

Since the Philippines joined COPUOS in 1977, the Filipino people has looked to the skies and beyond, aspiring to reach outer space, harnessing its full potential for national development, through our own space programme. Step-by-step, the Philippines is actively moving towards this goal, propelled by the dedication and hard work of our scientists and engineers, galvanized by the political will and commitment of our policy-makers, and supported by the valuable assistance of our international partners.

The Philippines launched its first microsatellite for scientific earth observation, Diwata-1, in 2016, subsequently followed by Diwata-2 in 2018, and the cubesat Maya-1 in 2018, signaling the emergence of the Philippines as a nascent space actor. Satellite data received by the Philippine Earth Data Resource and Observation (PEDRO) Center are subsequently processed by the Remote Sensing and Data Science (DATOS) Helpdesk, which are both currently based in the Advanced Science and Technology Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-ASTI) and are expected to be transitioned to the Philippine Space Agency in the near term.

Through satellite images and other data, these infrastructure and activities support and complement the efforts of the Philippine government in preparing for and responding to natural disasters, monitoring the environment and natural resources, and assessing the state of vegetation and high-value crops. Ultimately, the Philippines envisions the use of relevant and timely spaceborne information to support the country's decision-making and policy formulation processes towards more coherent and systematic governance, socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, as well as environmental, natural resources, and disaster risk reduction and management.

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In 2019, the Philippines has taken an even bigger leap in pursuit of this dream. Last August, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed into law the Philippine Space Act, which provides for the creation of the Philippine Space Agency or PHILSA. In December 2019, the President then appointed the head of the soon-to-be-established space agency. Preparations are ongoing to see the establishment of PHILSA through.

We continue to invest in our people and infrastructure, as well as support research and development of space technology. As a matter of fact, in September 2019, we launched the University Laboratory for Small Satellites and Space Engineering Systems or (ULYS3ES) in the University of the Philippines, to train future generations of Filipino **AND** Filipina space scientists and engineers, who we hope will build upon the work we have started.

We recognize the importance of international cooperation in outer space, and we will continue to build partnerships, strengthen our relationships, and collaborate on initiatives.

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates.

Nascent and emerging our space programme might be, the Philippines intends to play an active role in the Committee's discussions. The Philippines recognizes the role of COPUOS as the major forum for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and expresses its commitment in helping build consensus and bridge differences, in support of our shared values and goals.

On the "Space2030 Agenda", the Philippines believes that inclusive and sustainable development should be at the heart of our discussions. The Philippines encourages Member States to support and contribute tools that will enable the implementation of the Space2030 Agenda, particularly those that will build the capacity of developing countries to harness the benefits of outer space in support of their respective development efforts.

On "Space and Global Health", while the Philippines does not yet have any existing projects or initiatives in this field, we hope to learn from the experiences of other countries, and hope to build our capacity in using space technology to inform public health decisions.

And finally, with regard to the Working Group on the "Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities", the Philippines hopes that the Bureau will be established with due regard for geographic representation and gender equality. Nevertheless, the Philippines regrets that no female nominees have been fielded for the Bureau so far, and would like to reiterate that enhancing accessibility of outer space should also translate to the inclusion of women in space research and development, as well as in space diplomacy and policy-making.

The Philippine space journey will not happen overnight. But while our progress is incremental, our resolve and commitment towards the peaceful uses of outer space, especially in pursuit of sustainable development, remain as steadfast as ever.

Thank you, Madam Chair.