

76th session of the UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Fourth Committee Joint General Debate

**“International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”
(Agenda Item 53)**

INDIA STATEMENT

Madam Chair,

Let me begin by stating that as a major space-faring nation, India has vital developmental interests in space. We have consistently advocated the need to preserve outer space as a common heritage of humankind. We remain committed to maintaining outer space as an ever-expanding frontier for cooperative endeavours of all space-faring and space-aspiring nations.

India appreciates the role played by the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in encouraging the peaceful uses of outer space. We also appreciate the sincere efforts of UN Office of Outer Space Affairs in conducting 58th sessions of Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC), 60th session of Legal Subcommittee (LSC) and 64th sessions of COPOUS in hybrid mode taking into account the unprecedented pandemic situation. India is honoured to chair the New Working Group on Guidelines for Long Term Sustainability of outer space activities. We look forward to the constructive engagement of all COPUOS members on this matter.

Madam Chair,

India has been pursuing its space activities, for over 5 decades, with the vision of utilizing the applications of space technology for the benefit of the people of our country. Our space programme is focused on integrating the advances in space technology and applications with the national development goals and enhancing capabilities across launch vehicles, satellites and space applications for meeting the needs of the nation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every possible human endeavour over the last 2 years. Indian space programme was no exception to the challenges posed by the pandemic. However, by adopting new protocols, in line with national health guidelines, our national space agency, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was able to continue its space operations and successfully execute 3 launch vehicle missions, which also put satellites from other countries in their orbit. We appreciate the achievements of our friends like UAE in their space endeavours, in spite of the various pandemic restrictions.

Madam Chair,

India, while pursuing her national space programme, has attached importance to international cooperation in peaceful use of outer space. We have been partnering with space-aspiring countries by sharing our experience. As part of UNISPACE+50 initiative, India has implemented a capacity building programme on small satellite building with hands-on training in assembling, integrating and testing small satellites. Experts from more than 30 countries have benefited from this program. Buoyed by the positive feedback, we plan to conduct similar courses in the future as well.

India continues to share its facilities and expertise in the application of space science and technology through the UN-affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP). We have been collaborating with space-faring nations in advancing space technology. India is also contributing to capacity building in space law through various means.

Madam Chair,

India actively participates and contributes in various regional and international space fora including GEO (Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations), CEOS (Committee on Earth Observation Satellites) and UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). As a chair of CEOS, India hosted the 34th CEOS plenary in

October 2020 in virtual mode. India is a party to the major international treaties/regulations relating to outer space and also implements all the outer space related instruments. India implements a number of Transparency and Confidence Building Measures (TCBMs) - including registering space objects, pre-launch notifications and measures in harmony with the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

Recognising the growing contribution of the private sector in space activities, India has initiated a major space reform to enable their participation in our space programs. We are in the process of formulation of a national space legislation, to facilitate the overall growth of space activities in India with enhanced participation of non-governmental sector agencies/ industries in compliance with international treaty obligations.

Madam Chair,

Given the new challenges in the outer space activities with entry of more players, it is important to strengthen the international legal framework to ensure that outer space environment is conducive for peaceful uses. Outer space is becoming congested with more and more satellites being launched into Earth orbits. Satellite collisions could generate space debris endangering the use of these orbits. It is vital to ensure and also enhance the safety and security of all space assets. We believe that international consultations and consensus on these issues are very essential at this juncture.

In conclusion, Indian delegation would like to express its support to this Committee in all its endeavors in promoting peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of entire humanity.

I thank you Madam Chair.
