



Statement by South Africa

52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Delivered by Ms N Malefane

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Agenda Item 13: Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Mr Chairman,

The South Africa delegation is pleased to note the substantial progress that has been made by the Working Group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities since its inception in 2010, notably through the efforts of the four expert groups, which produced 31 candidate guidelines for our consideration. We thank the co-chairs of the four expert groups for their able leadership of those efforts.

Now we are in the phase where the deliberations are taking place in the plenary format and a number of delegations have proposed additional guidelines for our consideration. My delegation appreciates the efforts of delegations that have proposed new guidelines for our consideration at this session. We believe that an early introduction of this material will help us to achieve the current 2016 target for the finalization of the guidelines.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me now to offer a few considerations on some of the ideas that have emerged more recently in the development of the draft guidelines. One such idea relates to the security and integrity of ground infrastructure that is critical for space activities. This idea is contained in draft guideline 35 in document L.340 proposed by the Russian Federation and the new the proposed guideline contained in document CRP.10 that was proposed by the delegation of the United States in advance of this session.

Our delegation believes that protecting the integrity and security of critical ground infrastructure is an important component of ensuring the continuing safety of space operations and we would support the introduction of this concept in the set of draft guidelines. We believe that, given the growing number of non-State space actors, and given the growing internationalization of space activities, an explicit reference to this issue would strengthen the guidelines. Guideline 35 of the current set of proposed guidelines, as well as the additional guideline proposed by the United States in CRP.10 both touch on these issues, but from slightly different perspectives. We believe the underlying idea behind these draft guideline proposals should be retained in the set of guidelines going forward.

With regard to the view expressed by my delegation in the General Exchange of Views, that the LTS guidelines should not raise or impose new barriers to emerging space nations, my delegation is pleased to note in document L.340 several guidelines related to international cooperation and capacity building. My delegation believes that international cooperation through sharing of knowledge, experience and capacity building is an indispensable element in the sustainable utilization of near Earth space and the radio spectrum, which are both limited natural resources, to be utilized equitably for the benefit of all nations. We would therefore wish to see such ideas reflected in the final set of guidelines adopted by the Working Group.

With regard to the formulation of the draft guidelines, my delegation would like to support the view expressed by the German delegation that existing legal obligations should not appear to be reformulated as non-binding guidelines in order to avoid any ambiguities as to their legal status.

Lastly, we note that, in addition to the 19 consolidated draft guidelines contained in document L.340, there are now 10 new guidelines proposed by Brazil, the Russian Federation and the United States. Other delegations have proposed various improvements to the existing set of draft guidelines. We appreciate the efforts of all those delegations to propose these additional inputs, which we will carefully consider in the coming months leading up to the next session of the Committee. We note that the set of guidelines is increasing in length and we believe that, once we reach agreement on the new ideas to be incorporated into the final set of guidelines to be put forward by the working group, that some attention should be given to streamlining the document.

With regard to the proposal by France to regroup the guidelines in a slightly different set of categories to highlight those guidelines with a more operational focus, we believe that this proposed structure could facilitate the implementation of the guidelines. We note that this proposed restructuring retains the international cooperation and capacity building guidelines as one of the main sections, and therefore give due weight to these issues, in our view.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.