



STATEMENT

BY

MS N MAJAJA,

**CHIEF DIRECTOR: SPACE AFFAIRS, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

62nd SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OUTER SPACE

14 JUNE 2019



Chairperson

It is with great pleasure that the South African delegation participates in this the 62nd session of the UNCOPUOS. We would also like to make use of this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson, of this important gathering and we hereby also reaffirm our support towards actively contributing to the successful realisation of the Agenda before us.

My delegation also wishes to express our sincerest appreciation for the work carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and its Director Ms Simonetta Di Pippo and of course to the Secretariat for their dedicated work, in preparing for, and servicing this 62nd Session of the UNCOPUOS.

South Africa also aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Africa Group and the Group of 77 and China

Chairperson,

The increasing number of space actors, both governmental and non-governmental, with varying capacities and capabilities, are changing the status of space from an environment essentially for scientific activities, to an increasingly vulnerable, unstable and uncertain one, with various scientific, legal and diplomatic challenges. Consequently, more and more space practitioners, from developed as well as emerging space nations are increasingly looking to UNCOPUOS to deliver guidance on space governance issues.

South Africa notes with pride that UNCOPUOS continues to grow and is now up to 92 members, and accordingly we welcome the new UNCOPUOS member states, as well as other organisations and observers that have come on board since we last met in June 2018. We also welcome the request by Rwanda and Singapore for membership of UNCOPUOS.

Chairperson,

Since the last UNCOPUOS meeting in 2018, South Africa is proud to highlight that in December 2018, South Africa's second and what is widely acclaimed to be the African Continents' most advanced nanosatellite, namely ZACube-2, was successfully launched into space from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia. We are receiving valuable data from our satellite as it contributes towards achieving South Africa's National Development Plan.

Chairperson

It is vital that Earth Observation data remains freely available as this will provide vital information required for the realisation of the SDGs, and many other applications for societal benefits. South Africa, as the current GEO Co-Chair will therefore continue supporting the GEO and the African Group on Earth Observations in their efforts to implement Global Earth Observation System of Systems. The GEO Ministerial Summit and Plenary will be held this October in Canberra, Australia, and the 4th AfriGEO Symposium will be held this August in Nairobi, Kenya.

In terms of capacity building and international outreach, South Africa is again honoured to have organised the 2019 Africa Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law

Moot Competition. The Africa Round took place from the 9 to 10 May, 2019 at the Department of Trade and Industry in Pretoria. This year, 6 universities, three from Nigeria, two from South Africa and one from Uganda participated in the competition. The finals were between two of the Nigerian Teams; the University of Calabar and the Niger Delta University. We are, consequently, proud to announce that the University of Calabar, a new comer to the competition, won this year's African Round and are set to compete in the World finals, which will be held in Washington DC on the side lines of the IAC from 24-30 October, 2019.

Chairperson

The Problem for this year's competition, related to possible conflict between two countries as a result of Space resources, served to underscore the urgency that this committee should take a decision to start discussions on this topical issue and as a result, South Africa supports the establishment of a working group to kick-start discussions on Space Resources utilisation and exploitation.

Chairperson,

The historic UNISPACE+50 celebrations that took place last year in June, and in which South Africa is pleased to have participated, heralded the beginning of a new phase for UNCOPUOS. My delegation recognises that the utilisation of Outer Space will be a key driver towards the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, South Africa is of the strong view that from their very inception, the application of space technologies has been viewed as integral to the achievement of the SDGs. Consequently, South Africa will strive to be at the forefront of efforts to pursue discussions on the important topic.

Chairperson,

International cooperation is the cornerstone of South Africa's Space programme. In this regard, South Africa again reiterates the importance of the African Space Policy and Strategy, which was adopted on January 2016. In addition, South Africa also welcomes the decision of the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in February 2019, to establish of an African Space Agency to be hosted by Egypt. South Africa looks forward to working with our Continental partners, both multilaterally and bilaterally, towards the development of this agency.

Chairperson,

As you are aware, an issue that has captured the imagination of this Committee over the last few years has been the activities of the Working Group on the Long Term sustainability of Outer Space activities under the chairpersonship of our own Dr Peter Martinez, which concluded its mandate in June 2018. This working group, achieved, against all the odds, consensus on a preamble and 21 guidelines and this is highly commendable and for which all UNCOPUOS members should take credit and pride. South Africa has long contended that Outer Space activities are dynamic and ever changing due to scientific, technological and entrepreneurial developments. Consequently, it is imperative that these 21 voluntary Guidelines, be appropriately recognised as a lodestar, to inspire and guide the sustainable development and implementation of outer space activities for all humankind and for future generations. In addition, South Africa strongly contends that a mechanism to further address aspects of the long-term sustainability, in a concrete manner, should be established.

Chairperson,

In terms of events hosted in South Africa, I would like to refer to a workshop jointly organized by the South African National Space Agency and the Secure World Foundation on the topic of the Socio-Economic Benefits of Space Resources Utilization - African Perspectives. The event was held in Pretoria on 23-24 May 2019 and brought together space agency representatives from South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria, as well as business and space resources experts from the United States as well as academics and diplomats, from across the continent, including from the African Union Commission. The workshop informally explored African perspectives in this emerging area of technical and commercial activity, it identified the benefits of development in this area, and reviewed methods for participation by African entities in the sector.

Chairperson,

While on the topic of events, please allow me to highlight that the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) will co-host SpaceOps 2020, from 18 – 22 May 2020 in Cape Town. This event will bring together the global space operations community to address state-of-the-art operations principles, methods and tools. South Africa is also proud to announce that SpaceOps 2020 will be held for the first time on the African continent, and all are invited.

Chairperson,

In closing, allow me to reiterate that we are aware that currently, technological developments, exploration and utilization of Outer Space are progressing at an unprecedented rate. Consequently, we should be cognisant that these developments could lead to a situation of increased tension in Outer Space relations in the absence

of a coherent legal environment. However, we should be guided by the existing international Space treaties and by the fact that Outer Space is a global commons for equitable exploitation and indeed protection by all nations. In this regard, South Africa believes that discussions at the multi-lateral platforms, such as this Committee are the ones that involve and encompass all nations in order to promote positive deliberations and develop an effective way forward.

Thank You.
