



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER
SPACE: 63rd SESSION**

**STATUS AND APPLICATION OF THE FIVE UNITED NATIONS TREATIES ON OUTER
SPACE INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING IN SPACE LAW**

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Chairperson,

Adherence to the United Nations treaties contributes to the creation of a safe, secure, and sustainable atmosphere for the development of outer space activities and enhances the effectiveness of COPUOS as the main body for discussing and negotiating international space governance. As a party to four UN Treaties South Africa is committed to the development of these frameworks for the peaceful use of outerspace.

Chairperson,

South Africa notes with appreciation the growing number of parties to the five UN treaties on outer space and strongly urges those States that have not yet become signatories to these treaties, to consider doing so.

On the domestic front, South Africa has been actively engaged with the implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outerspace to enhance the safety of space operations, mitigate associated risks and promote international cooperation for the benefit of all.

Considering the growing number of non-state space actors and the benefits that can be derived from space science technology and its applications, it is imperative that space actors conform to applicable international space law and relevant UN guidelines to safeguard the peaceful use of outerspace. This includes the prevention of an arms race in outerspace.

Chairperson,

The African Space Policy and Strategy envisages space science and technology as pivotal catalysts for inclusive and sustainable development across the continent. Likewise, South Africa's national space policy is guided by socio-economic goals and international commitments as a responsible space actor.

Capacity building in Space Law is thus central to enhancing our understanding and implementation of Treaties. South Africa has been the host of several rounds of the African Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court since its inception in 2010, resulting in remarkable growth in participation and interest in the competition over the years.

The 2023 competition was held virtually from 10th to 12th May 2023, and coordinated by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Competition (the dtic). Thirteen universities from across the African continent took part in the event. Calabar University from Nigeria emerged as the representative of the Africa Region at the 74th International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in Baku, Azerbaijan. We commend the Nigerian Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) and Learnspace of Nigeria for organizing the inaugural national rounds for Nigerian universities and encourage other African countries to build capacity amongst young scientists and generate interest in the legal aspects of outer space. South Africa is currently organising the Regional Space law Moot Court which will be held virtually from the 22-24 May 2024.

Chairperson,

South Africa firmly supports inclusivity, diversity and representativity in space-related activities and encourages Member States to further mainstream gender equality in their programmes to address current disparities and mitigate the challenges women often face. This could include enhanced focus on STEM subjects.

South Africa has been actively involved in shaping university curricula to support and develop the field of space studies. The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) provides a postgraduate Masters' degree program of Engineering in Satellite Systems and Applications, which incorporates a module on "Management of Space Technology," aimed providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the space industry, covering legal aspects and the management of space technologies.

To conclude: Chairperson, South Africa continues to uphold its commitment to raising awareness of the legal and political dimensions of space law, including through capacity building.

Thank you,