



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
63RD SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
TO BE DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RAPULANE MOLEKANE
AGENDA ITEM 4 GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Date: 06 February 2026

Chairperson,

On behalf of my Delegation, I congratulate the Chairperson and all the Members of the Bureau. We also take this opportunity to welcome the new COPUOS Member States.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group.

Chairperson,

This 63rd session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee takes place in the midst of unprecedented global uncertainty, conflict and erosion of multilateralism. However, South Africa remains committed to multilateralism, solidarity and international cooperation as central tenets in the governance of outer space.

In this regard, South Africa recognises the importance of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as an essential forum for the exchange of views and information on scientific and technical issues of outer space activities and existing legal instruments.

We remain committed to international cooperation for mutually beneficial technologies and peaceful uses of outer space. South Africa commends the work of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in promoting this international cooperation and call upon the Secretariat to redouble its efforts.

We frown upon all attempts to use space for reasons inconsistent with the maintenance of international peace and security and selfish greed to undermine achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Outer Space Treaty states that there shall be freedom of scientific investigation in outer space and States shall facilitate and encourage international cooperation for such investigation. Therefore, what we are seeing contradicts this noble Mission.

South Africa continues to explore new approaches to ensure that outer space activities are conducted to contribute to the prosperity and sustainable development of all nations and to safeguard the continued peaceful use of outer space.

Chairperson,

South Africa would like to reiterate our previously stated view that the LTS guidelines should not have the effect of raising barriers for developing nations in conducting their own outer space activities but believes that this risk can be mitigated through adequately addressing capacity building as an integral part of the guidelines.

South Africa concurs with the view that Member States should pay urgent attention to the problem associated with space debris and calls for the minimization of the impact of space debris on future space missions.

Chairperson,

We believe in constructive discussion on the uses of outer space for the benefit of humankind. We should ensure that the regulation of certain technologies or behaviours in outer space do not prevent States from implementing their respective development strategies. South Africa considers outer space and outer space technologies as useful tools to further develop science and technology for sustainable development. Accordingly, the National Space Policy of South Africa focuses, amongst others, on contributing to the country's economic growth and social development.

Chairperson,

South Africa is equally troubled about the possibility of an arms race in outer space and would also like to reiterate the importance of Article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. South Africa would like to stress that those countries that possess major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a view to promoting and strengthening international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Chairperson,

The MeerKAT radio telescope and the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope, located in remote parts of South Africa, need to find a way to coexist with large satellite constellations. Similarly, the Southern African Large Telescope, the largest single optical telescope in the southern hemisphere, also needs to find a way to coexist with large satellite constellations.

South Africa supports the realization of an African outer space programme within the framework of the African Union Agenda 2063 and welcomes, in that regard, the establishment of the African Space Agency, headquartered in Egypt. The increasing amount of space debris from spacefaring nations poses a severe threat to existing African satellites and future missions and the African Space Agency will play an important role in advancing the space vision for the continent.

Chairperson,

South Africa is pleased with the activities geared towards the promotion of gender equality and the increased role of women in space activities, including through targeted capacity-building and technical advisory activities, and efforts to encourage enhanced involvement of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that you have our delegation's full support in ensuring a successful and productive outcome of this session. Chairperson, I thank you.