

Statement by Mr. Peter Pindják on behalf of the Slovak Republic in the General Debate on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since this is the first time, my delegation is taking the floor at the Fourth Committee this year, allow me to congratulate you on assuming Chairmanship of the Committee and wish you as well as fellow Bureau members a continued success in your respective duties during the current session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, allow me also to thank the Chair of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) for their excellent work that has led to considerable achievements in Vienna.

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement, which has been delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union earlier on Wednesday. It is my honor to make a few additional remarks and inform the Committee on the developments, which relate to international cooperation in outer space, from our national perspective.

Madam Chair,

In 2010, Slovakia formally initiated cooperation and accession process to the European Space Agency, by signing the Framework Cooperation Agreement. The subsequent bilateral agreement between Slovakia and the European Space Agency signed in 2015 has paved the way for Slovakia to participate in the Program of the European Cooperating States (PECS), which has brought new opportunities for the development and growth of our private sector, academia as well as research and development institutions. In addition to many successful scientific space projects, which have a long tradition in Slovakia, we are proud to report a continuous growth of our space industry with more than 40 companies participating in space sector today, generating sales revenue of 100 million EUR.

Slovakia has been a founding member of COPUOS and a signatory to four major UN treaties and conventions on outer space. In March 2016, in compliance with Article II of the UN Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, we have created a national registry of space objects at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The first Slovak satellite launched in space in June of 2017, skCUBE, had marked the first entry in our registry; the information, which we duly transmitted to the UN Secretary-General in line with the UN Registration Convention.

In 2018, we have set up an inter-ministerial working group at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and launched preparations on the national legislature on outer space activities. The ongoing deliberations on the regulatory framework take into account the provisions enshrined in the UN Charter, all relevant UN treaties, conventions and resolutions as well as the recently adopted Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of outer space activities.

Madam Chair,

In June of this year, Slovakia has adopted its first-ever strategic and conceptual document on outer space – the Conceptual Framework for Space Activities of Slovakia. The document maps out all relevant space activities of Slovakia and sets out a vision for 2020 and beyond for further development of space sector in Slovakia, and in particular, within the framework of the European Union as well as within the cooperation with the European Space Agency. It is also important to note, that the document reaffirms the commitment of Slovakia to international cooperation as well as responsible behavior in outer space in line with the UN Charter and international law.

In recent years, the main emphasis of Slovakia in peaceful uses of outer space has been placed on the development of the Slovak space industry, further strengthening of our science and research institutions, establishing new academic programs as well as engaging with non-governmental organizations.

Madam Chair,

International cooperation in outer space has a tremendous potential to benefit the mankind and help fulfill the goals of the UN, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as mitigating and preventing natural disasters and conflicts across the world. In an evolving dynamics in the space sector marked with significant investments in commercial activities, new technological concepts, the growing access to space technologies and data, and also the growing congestion of Earth orbits, we consider important that even small countries and new space-faring nations make strong commitments to promoting a safe, secure and sustainable outer space environment. In this vein, Slovakia welcomes and highly appreciates the adoption of the preamble and 21 Guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as an important step towards strengthening confidence building measures and promoting responsible behavior in outer space.

Thank you, Madam Chair.