

**Statement under the Long-Term Sustainability of Space Activities Agenda Item,**

**Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the**

**United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,**

**11 February 2014**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, on behalf of Secure World Foundation (SWF) I would like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of this Committee in addressing the issue of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities from a truly international and collaborative perspective.

Looking back at the history of the long-term sustainability agenda item provides an important perspective on just how international the process has been. The topic was first introduced to this Committee in 2005 by Karl Doetsch of Canada, former Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC). In 2007, it was suggested as an agenda item by then-Chairman of COPUOS Gerard Brachet of France which led to the creation of the formal Working Group in 2010 under the leadership of Peter Martinez from South Africa. Over the last three years, the four Expert Groups have labored diligently under the guidance of co-chairs from Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Portugal and the United States. Within the individual groups, experts from more than thirty different nations and a dozen international intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations have contributed their ideas and perspectives on these critical issues.

That effort has culminated in the preliminary set of thirty-three draft guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities for consideration by the Working Group at this session of STSC. This is a significant accomplishment, and all the Co-Chairs and experts should be commended for their efforts. It is now up to the Working Group to meld these draft guidelines into a consolidated consensus

document that provides clear, tangible recommendations for voluntary best practices that can be applied by States, international organizations, national non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. We hope the Working Group can do so in a timely manner.

As a reminder of the importance of this issue, the World Economic Forum recently published a preview of an upcoming book on the importance of space capabilities here on Earth. Entitled “Bringing Space Down to Earth,” the book highlights the important role space capabilities play in addressing the most pressing challenges facing humanity. These challenges include climate change, providing communications, healthcare, and education to remote or rural areas, food security, economic development, disaster management, human rights, and the sustainable management of forests, fisheries, and fresh water.

The final chapter in the book summarizes the threats to the long-term sustainability of space activities that could endanger our ability to use space for these benefits in the future. It reinforces the foresight this Committee had in bringing the issue to the forefront. The book also underscores the importance of reaching timely consensus on a set of guidelines that could help improve space sustainability.

In addition to the efforts of this Committee, there is also significant progress being made on these important issues in other forums. Last July the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures (TCBMs) for Space Activities, convened by the United Nations General Assembly, reached consensus on a set of recommendations of their own. Under the Chairmanship of Victor Vasiliev of Russia and with the participation of experts from fifteen geographically diverse nations, the GGE’s report to the Secretary General provides specific recommendations for collaborative efforts to address threats to the sustainability and security of outer

space. Pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 68/50, which was co-sponsored by China, Russia and the United States, the GGE report has been referred to COPUOS for consideration.

While not all of the issues addressed by the GGE or their recommendations fall under the purview of this Committee, there is some crucial overlap between these two efforts. As noted in the GGE report, some of the proposed draft guidelines under consideration by this Committee have characteristics similar to those of TCBMs. The report further notes that some of the proposed draft guidelines could be considered as potential TCBMs and still others could provide the technical basis for the implementation of specific TCBMs proposed by the GGE. We believe that the linkages between the work of COPUOS on long-term sustainability of space activities and the GGE's report on TCBMs should be a topic for future discussion by this Committee.

In closing, I would like to once again congratulate the efforts of Dr. Martinez and the Expert Groups in reaching this point in the process. We are encouraged by the progress made to date on this important issue and look forward to the conclusion of the Working Group's deliberations and consensus on a set of guidelines. That consensus will help pave the way towards a future in which all nations can continue to utilize space in a peaceful, sustainable manner to improve lives and help address the many challenges we face here on Earth.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, thank you for your time.

Secure World Foundation

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