

Statement by Counsellor Naeem Sabir Khan in the Fourth Committee during the 79th UN General Assembly Session on "International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space"

(29 October 2024)

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Distinguished Chair,

I thank the Chair of the Committee for Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for an informative and useful report.

2. Pakistan believes that Outer space, with its vast potential, offers unprecedented opportunities for scientific discovery, technological innovation, and international collaboration. It is a shared heritage of humanity that transcends national boundaries and provides us with the ability to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time, from climate change to global warming.

3. Pakistan has been a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) since 1973 and has contributed actively toward its valuable work. We have ratified all five core United Nations space treaties, and Pakistan's national space program focuses on the pursuit of socio-economic progress and the welfare of its citizens. The program accords capabilities in diverse fields such as agriculture health, water management, meteorology, climate change mitigation, health humanitarian assistance, disaster management, satellite navigation, and communication. During the past year, we have seen remarkable advancements in agricultural productivity through the use of satellite-based monitoring systems.

4. Similarly, Pakistan has used space-based technologies to support sustainable forest management, which is an essential part of our ecosystem. Pakistan’s vulnerability to natural disasters is well known. Space technology has become a vital tool in our efforts to reduce disaster risks and respond to emergencies. By integrating satellite-based early warning systems into our national disaster management framework, we have been able to predict and respond to floods, earthquakes, and landslides with greater accuracy.

5. Pakistan's national space policy places a special emphasis on international cooperation. It is reflected in Pakistan’s membership in the International Astronautic Federation (IAF), and Committee on Space Research (COSPAR). Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation

Organization (APSCO) and Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF). SUPARCO, Pakistan's national space agency, hosts the UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, the Mission Control Center of COSPAS-SARSAT and the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Science & Technology (ISNET). We have also applied for membership in the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG). The ICG's membership will promote compatibility, interoperability, and transparency with current and future satellite navigation systems.

6. Pakistan also participates in various projects and programs undertaken under the framework of bilateral and multilateral space cooperation agreements with international organizations and states to achieve milestones in its National Space Program-2047.

Madam Chair,

7. As a space-emerging nation, the prime focus of Pakistan's national space program is the pursuit of sustainable socio-economic progress. The Government of Pakistan approved its national space policy last year (2023) which provides a framework for effectively harnessing space technologies and applications towards this objective.

8. The Government of Pakistan has also approved the Space Activities Rules, demonstrating our firm commitment to advancing space activities within the country. These space-related national legislations underscore the critical need for sustained governmental commitment and clear policy directives to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of Pakistan's space program.

9. In 2023, Pakistan joined the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) program, a collaborative lunar research project for multi-purpose scientific research. On May 3, 2024, Pakistan launched the iCUBE-Qamar satellite onboard China's Chang 'E 6 mission. Pakistan also launched its Multi-Mission Communication Satellite PakSat-MM1 on 30 May 2024, from China. Pakistan is also planning to send a rover to the lunar south pole onboard the

upcoming Chang'E-8 mission to enhance the in-situ analysis and align with ongoing research initiatives.

10. Pakistan will also host the International Conference on Space Science and Technology (ICSAT) scheduled to be held in 2025. The event is being co-organized by the Institute of Space Technology (IST) in Pakistan, in collaboration with ISNET and international organizations, such as the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO).

11. Pakistan remains committed to contributing to lunar exploration and leveraging international partnerships to enhance its space exploration capabilities.

Madam Chair,

12. The potential of space as a driver for sustainable development cannot be realised unless the issue of the "space divide", which not only persists but continues to widen, is effectively addressed. Developing countries continue to face considerable technical and financial hurdles that prevent them from fully benefiting from space technologies. Pakistan has called for COPUOS and its subcommittees to make all efforts to develop robust international cooperation for capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer to ensure that developing nations can meaningfully enjoy their rights in the exploration, access and use of outer space for sustainable development.

13. Space is a finite and fragile resource and must be treated as a global common. Pakistan attaches great importance to the work of the Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability to further build on the progress already achieved. We reiterate that the evolving framework on long-term sustainability must not impose undue and unreasonably high standards and obligations which might be prejudicial to the interests of developing and space-emerging countries by limiting their access.

14. Space traffic management and space debris mitigation are of vital importance for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Pakistan is concerned at the ever-increasing number of objects being launched into orbit including mega constellations. We reiterate that space debris mitigation is a common but differentiated responsibility

15. Pakistan has welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resources Activities and the adoption of its detailed work plan and methods of work. We believe that the normative and legal framework governing exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources must be consistent with existing international space law i.e. five UN space treaties, particularly the Outer Space Treaty and fully respect the principles of non-appropriation and equitable access.

I thank you.