



**Permanent Mission of Italy
International Organisations - Vienna**

**61st SESSION OF THE
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE
(STSC)**

**Statement by
Ambassador Debora Lepre**

Item 4: general exchange of views

Vienna, 29 January 2024

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, including the strong condemnation of the Russian cynical approach to the work of COPUOS and the concerns on the proposed resolution entitled “Space Science and Technology for Promoting Peace”, but allow me to add few remarks in my national capacity.

First, let me congratulate you, Ms. Ulpia Botezatu, for your election, and let me sincerely **welcome Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini** as the new Director of UNOOSA. We are eager to work closely together and we wish her the best of luck in this endeavor.

Madame Chairperson,

The Italian Government takes pride in its leadership position in space science and technologies and will make use of its G7 Presidency in 2024 to advance the space agenda. We attach the utmost importance to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and we are particularly committed in the work of the Working Group on Long Term Sustainability Guidelines.

Let me also reiterate Italy’s commitment to the principles of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related UN Space 2030

Agenda, negotiated within COPUOS. We are eager to move this topic forward, especially in light of the upcoming **Summit of the Future in 2024**. To this end, in the months to come we should play an active role in the drafting process of the “Pact for the Future”, in order to reaffirm the central role of Space, UNOOSA and COPUOS.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me also reiterate our support for keeping a specific item dedicated to **“Dark and Quiet Skies”** in the agenda of the subcommittee, as proposed in the Conference room paper submitted by Chile and Spain and sponsored by Italy among others. We do hope that the resistance expressed by few delegations last year can be overcome and that consensus can be reached on this important outstanding issue.

Madame Chairperson,

Italy also wishes to express support to the Space4Women program and the results of the last Experts Meeting in Montreal, and in particular the first **“Gender mainstreaming Toolkit”** for the space sector, under finalization. It is a further, very practical step to promote girls and women presence in the space sector, which I personally welcome also in my new role as International Gender Champion. We support the initiative and we look forward to further discuss it at the upcoming COPUOS session in June. **On this note, I am also glad to share that on February 12 the Italian Space Agency will host in Rome the “International Day of Women and Girls in Science”.**

Madame Chairperson,

During the current session, the Italian delegation **will intervene under the agenda Items** dedicated to sustainable development, space debris, space system based disaster management support and near-Earth object. These are topics to which we attach great importance and where we have developed a significant expertise. On sustainable development and space debris the Italian Space Agency -ASI- will also deliver two technical Presentations.

Italy has been actively involved in **space debris** research for over 20 years. ASI currently participates in EU SST (space surveillance and tracking) projects and contribute to develop services through optical telescopes and radars. Our Country is also very actively involved in the study of **Near-Earth objects** in the context of EU-funded initiatives such as the NEOROCKS project. In this field, ASI and the Polytechnic University of Milan are also carrying out a hypothetical exercise within the framework of the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group.

Madame Chairperson,

Before I conclude, allow me to list some important activities carried out by Italy in 2023 in the space field:

- In June 2023 we had the pleasure of launching the Spei Satelles mission, which put into orbit a nano-book with Pope Francis' message of hope, a unique combination of science, technology and faith;

- In July 2023 the European Space Agency, with substantial contribution from Italy, successfully launched the EUCLID mission, which aims at studying dark matter and dark energy;
- In August 2023, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics awarded the Italian “LICIACube mission”, which was part of NASA’s Asteroid Redirection Test mission, as “Small Satellite Mission of the Year”.
- In December 2023, ASI and the University of Melbourne launched a nano-satellite called SpIRIT (Space Industry Responsive Intelligent Thermal) that put into orbit the HERMES payload, a X-ray detector;
- Also in December 2023, a Center for Simulation and Control of Lunar Robotic Missions was launched in Turin, in the heart of the emerging AeroSpazio City, where the “Rover Operation Control Center” dedicated to Mars operations and simulations is already operational.

Madame Chairperson,

Let me finish by reminding that this year Milan will host the International Astronautical Congress. We warmly invite all delegations to participate in the event, scheduled for 14-18 October. In view of the Congress, Italy is planning to organize an exhibition named “the Italian Spaceway”, focused on space sustainability, in the margins of the upcoming COPUOS.

Thank you