

COPUOS – Scientific and Technical Subcommittee 57th Session,

Vienna 19-30 April 2021

MOON VILLAGE ASSOCIATION STATEMENT

On April 26 PM

Madame Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for the Moon Village Association, as an Observer member with COPUOS to address, virtually, this session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Madame Chair, the MVA Delegation is confident that, under your wise leadership, this session will reach fruitful results, even if not in presence. My delegation would also like to extend its gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and her staff for their hard work in organizing this meeting.

MVA considers that the near future will see a multitude of lunar missions through the efforts of both space agencies and commercial stakeholders efforts. The current lack of coordination mechanisms for lunar activities presents challenges to future missions and could lead to unintentional harmful interference, especially in the light of the increased global interest in specific areas like the lunar south pole. The need to preserve the peaceful uses of space, together with the desire to begin a new era of sustainable space exploration, urges the consideration of approaches that promote future lunar sustainability, or recommended practices for upcoming lunar activities.

A number of relevant issues will need to be defined in detail to ensure sustainable lunar exploration and settlement in and around the Moon, including, for example, benefits sharing, sharing of information, registration of activities, mitigating the creation of debris in lunar orbit, and coordinating access to natural resources.

In 2019, the Moon Village Association (MVA) took the initiative to address these critical issues with the goal of de-risking future lunar missions and increasing global cooperation for lunar exploration and settlement. The initial work of the MVA resulted in the publication of the first edition of its *Best Practices for Sustainable Lunar Activities* on 5 March 2020 for public consultation. The MVA hosted several public webinars, as well as informal discussions with experts from space agencies from all continents. These consultations resulted in the publication of the second edition of the Best Practices, on 19 October 2020. This document was intended as an input for further elaboration. The current version of the Best Practices is available, for information, on the Moon Village Association website: www.moonvillageassociation.org

The positive feedback received from several space agencies on the Best Practices initiative encouraged the MVA to continue its endeavours in fostering a global discussion on sustainable lunar activities. Therefore, the MVA decided to promote the development of a neutral forum for multi-stakeholder discussions on lunar exploration: The *Global Expert Group on Sustainable Lunar Activities* (or GEGSLA).

The Group is chaired by Dr. Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu (Romania). Its members, at the moment, include 38 experts from the following countries: Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Israel, Kenya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America.

The deliverables of the Group will be:

1. Recommended Framework and Key Elements for Peaceful, and Sustainable Lunar Activities
2. Guidelines for lunar activity implementation and operations addressing lunar debris mitigation, benefits sharing, sharing of information, registration of activities, regulating access to natural resources, etc.

The detail content of our considerations and proposals to COPUOS and its subcommittees is included in the Conference Room Paper AC.105/C1/2021/CRP.20

Considering the imminence of continuous activities, on the surface and in the orbit of the Moon, carried out by several states, through governmental and private institutions, a multitude of new issues will require, in our view, regulations at the United Nations level. MVA proposes, and asks the support of Member States in this respect, that starting with the 65th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 2022, to include the topic of Sustainable Lunar Activities as a new permanent agenda item, considering the interlinked complex technical and legal issues.

The Group plans to complete the preliminary drafting of its deliverables in early 2022. Once GEGSLA will have completed its activities, by end 2022, MVA will provide the final set of deliverables to COPUOS and its subcommittees. This could allow COPUOS to start further discussion and deliberation using the deliverables of GEGSLA in 2023 at the 66th session.

More details of the MVA activities will be provided at a technical presentation on April 27 AM.

MVA looks forward to working with COPUOS and its subcommittees for the stepwise, equitable and sustainable development of the Moon Village, and are eager to play our part, as permanent observers at the historic, central, and pivotal activity of COPUOS in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space

Thank you for your attention,

Dr. Giuseppe Reibaldi

President Moon Village Association