



**Republic of Malawi**

**STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY**

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**DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MALAWI TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**First COMMITTEE**

**Cluster VI: Other Disarmament Measures and international  
security**

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**Check against delivery**

**Mr. Chairman**

Malawi has clear interest in working with international partners to promote the responsible and peaceful use of the outer space. This is because Malawi appreciates that the development of space technology holds immense potential to benefit both developed and developing countries and remains pivotal to the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Like many Least Developing Countries, Malawi relies on assured access to space based systems and its applications to support its economic prosperity and maintain public safety.

**Mr. Chairman**

Amongst the many other important uses, space technologies are becoming increasingly vital to modern day disaster management activities, water resource management as well as climate change. For instance, earth observation satellites provide images that assist rapid-mapping in all phases of the disaster management cycle: mitigation of potential risks in a given area, preparedness for eventual disasters, immediate response to a disaster event, and the recovery or reconstruction efforts following it.

Such technology has been invaluable to Malawi when it was hit by the worst ever flood disaster in the history, in 2015. The UN Office of Outer Space and its Applications (UNOOSA) through WFP-Malawi activated the International UN Charter and other mechanisms on outer space systems to download satellite images in the areas that were affected by the floods. With this information, Malawi was able to plan evacuation routes and access imagery for initial impact assessment.

**Mr. Chairman**

Malawi places greater significance on the need for more international cooperation, identification of new avenues and opportunities for capacity building of developing countries in

using space science and technology for the welfare and security of their communities. Initiatives such as technical assistance and geo-spatial information sharing will be vital in the achievement of the African Space Policy and Strategy adopted by the African Union in 2016.

To this end, it is worth mentioning that Malawi being an agricultural dependant country has benefited greatly from the technical support and trainings from developed countries in space technology and data usage collected by satellites. The UN Space based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) and the United Nations Programme on Space Application visited Malawi in 2013, with support from the Government of Austria. A great variety of topics were addressed including remote sensing applications for disaster risk management, land use planning for disaster prevention, the added value of satellite derived soil moisture assessments. These have remained vital to our agriculture industry.

### **Mr Chairman**

Malawi further notes with concern the threats being posed on the outer space and its applications, owing to the rapid advancement in space technology, and the ever increasing human activities in the usage of outer space. The build-up of debris or “space junk” orbiting around the earth, to a greater extent caused by unregulated and mismanaged space technology, poses a potential danger to sensitive space equipment, more importantly the International Space Station. We also express our concern over the prospects of arms race in space. The militarisation of outer space is not compatible with the international agreements on outer space usage, let alone, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Mr Chairman**

It is for this reason that Malawi places greater importance on the work of the UN Office of Outer Space and its Applications (UNOOSA), the Committee of the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and the corresponding international protocols in protecting and preserving the planet and its environment.

However, at a time of heightened global strategic tensions, relative insularity and increasingly diverse vested interests, Malawi hopes for legally binding instruments with reliable guarantees, that will champion the promotion of safe and responsible conduct of space activities in compliance with provisions of international space law. Malawi reiterates the call for greater transparency in space activities and information sharing in order to secure the peaceful nature of space activities and their sustainability.

Malawi reaffirms our belief in the principles and objectives that led to the establishment of COPUOS in 1959, that outer space is a common heritage of mankind, therefore, there should be ways in which all States, in all fairness, can benefit from its explorations.

**I thank you for your attention.**