



Statement by Christopher Johnson, Secure World Foundation, on
Agenda Item 3 “General Exchange of Views,” 17 April 2015

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, I would like to take this opportunity today to introduce a new initiative that the Secure World Foundation began this year, one we believe will be a significant complement to the work of this Subcommittee.

The space domain is currently experiencing a rapid increase in the number and diversity of actors involved in space activities. More than 70 states, commercial companies, and international organizations currently operate more than 1,200 satellites in Earth orbit. These activities provide a wide range of socioeconomic benefits. Driven by the commercialization of space technology, and the lowering of barriers to participate in space activities, the growth in the number of space actors is accelerating.

The increased availability of space technology and space capabilities has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, the broadening field of actors in space is driving innovation, lowering costs, and bringing the beneficial capabilities and services of satellites to larger groups of people around the world. However, the growth in space activities, and the influx of new actors, has the potential to exacerbate many of the current threats to the

long-term sustainable use of space, such as on-orbit crowding, radio-frequency interference, the proliferation of space debris, and the chances that an incident in space might create or escalate geopolitical tensions on Earth.

It is vital that the space community find ways to maximize the potential positive benefits and minimize the negative consequences of this trend in increasing and diversified space activities. This Committee's current effort to develop a set of best practice guidelines to promote the long-term sustainability of space activities is an important step towards achieving this goal.

Today, I would like to announce that Secure World has initiated a new project to develop a handbook for new actors in space. The publication of this handbook will serve the goal of sustainable space activities. We have identified two categories of new actors that are the primary audience for our publication: states developing national space policies and regulations; and start-up companies, universities, and other nongovernmental entities beginning their first foray into space activity.

The goal of the handbook, which will be made freely available and not sold for profit, is to provide both of these groups of new actors with a broad overview of the fundamental principles, laws, norms, and best practices for peaceful, safe, and responsible activity in space. The handbook will be interdisciplinary in nature, linking information and perspectives across legal, policy, and technical disciplines. Where possible, it will provide selected, concrete examples of how existing actors have approached various issues, and highlight differences between existing practices and solutions.

Over the next year, Secure World will be working with governments, satellite operators, academia, and civil society to develop the content of the handbook. Our goal is to make a clear, concise, and useful resource that is understandable to new actors and reflects the knowledge the space community has developed over the last six decades of activities in space. The

publication will be available in both printed and electronic forms, and eventually a website will have many more details and links to other resources.

As part of the process of developing the handbook, we will be soliciting feedback from the space community on the topics and content at various stages throughout the year. Today, every delegation to this Committee received in their pigeonholes a printed copy of a detailed outline of the handbook, which includes the overall structure and topics that we currently plan to include in the handbook. An electronic copy is also available on our website at www.swfound.org/handbook. We welcome any and all feedback.

Feedback can be provided to me, Chris Johnson, in person over the course of this week, or it can be submitted electronically through a form on our website at the previous link. Your feedback is essential to ensure that no important perspective or issue is overlooked as we prepare a document that we hope will be a fundamental resource for new entrants into the realm of space activity.

We hope to engage in a continuing dialogue with this Committee and other stakeholders over the course of the year as we refine the handbook outline and develop the content. We are open to suggestions for enhancing the usefulness of the handbook, as well as opportunities to partner with other organizations and experts to help make it a useful tool for promoting space sustainability.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, thank you for your time, and we look forward to hearing your feedback and engaging with you further on this important issue.