Statement by Emily Pierce

U.S. Representative to the Legal Subcommittee of the

UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Agenda Item 6(a) – Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space

March 21, 2023

Thank you, Chair. The United States appreciates the opportunity to present its views on matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space.

The United States has expressed its views on these issues in the past, and those views have not changed. The United States continues to hold the view that there is no need to seek a legal definition or delimitation for outer space. The current framework has presented no practical difficulties and activities in outer space are flourishing as we have heard already this session. Given this situation, an attempt to define or delimit outer space would be an unnecessary theoretical exercise that could unintentionally complicate existing activities and that might not be able to adapt to future technological developments. The current framework has served everyone well, and we should continue to operate under it until there is a demonstrated need and a practical basis for developing a definition or delimitation.

It is worth noting that some federal states within the United States have adopted or proposed definitions of “outer space” or related concepts for their own purposes, such as regulatory compliance or tax laws. These actions do not relate to, and are not evidence of, the existence of a definition of outer space under international law.

Thank you, Chair.