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| **Council 2017 Geneva, 15-25 May 2017** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.15** | **Document C17/94-E** |
| **28 April 2017** |
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Note by the Secretary-General

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ITU’S ROLE AS SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR SPACE ASSETS UNDER THE SPACE PROTOCOL

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution submitted by **the United States of America**.

Houlin ZHAO  
 Secretary-General

Contribution from the United States of America

ITU’S ROLE AS SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR SPACE ASSETS UNDER THE SPACE PROTOCOL

**Introduction**

The United States sought input from the commercial satellite industry regarding their views on the ITU assuming the role as the Supervisory Authority to an International Registry for Space Assets. The Satellite Industry Association (SIA) in the attached letter to the ITU Secretary General Houlin Zhao raises several concerns regarding whether the establishment of an international Registry for Space Assets under the Cape Town Convention would lead to additional costs and delays for the satellite industry.

In light of these concerns, an endorsement of Council for the ITU to become the supervisory authority at this time is premature. The United States proposes that the ITU Secretary General continue to express interest as an observer in the work of the Preparatory Committee, and that 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference could make a final decision on whether the ITU should become the Supervisory Authority.



April 21, 2017

Mr. Houlin Zhao

Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union

Place des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva

Switzerland

*Via e-mail*

# Re: Potential Endorsement of ITU as Supervisory Authority to an International Registry for Space Assets

Dear Mr. Zhao:

The Satellite Industry Association1 (SIA) respectfully requests this letter be considered for Council for the May 2017 meeting. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his attention to this matter.

# Establishment of an International Registry for Space Assets

SIA wishes to re-iterate our concerns regarding the establishment of an International Registry for Space Assets to the Space Protocol registration. This proposed registry adds an undue burden and uncertainty onto the satellite industry; one that already adheres to robust domestic regulatory requirements. Any additional steps ultimately will delay service and increase costs, which does not serve the global good. Concern regarding the need to satisfy “requirements as may be established in the regulations2” may, in addition, undermine the level of certainty expected by creditors as to the identification of space assets for purposes of registration.

1. SIA Executive Members include: The Boeing Company; AT&T Services, Inc.; EchoStar

Corporation; Intelsat S.A.; Iridium Communications Inc.; Kratos Defense & Security Solutions;

Ligado Networks; Lockheed Martin Corporation; Northrop Grumman Corporation; OneWeb;

SES Americom, Inc.; Space Exploration Technologies Corp.; SSL; and ViaSat, Inc. SIA Associate

Members include: ABS US Corp.; Artel, LLC; Blue Origin; DataPath, Inc; DigitalGlobe Inc.; DRS

Technologies, Inc.; Eutelsat America Corp.; Global Eagle Entertainment; Glowlink

Communications Technology, Inc.; Hughes; Inmarsat, Inc.; Kymeta Corporation; L-3 Electron

Technologies, Inc.; O3b Limited; Panasonic Avionics Corporation; Planet; Semper Fortis Solutions; Spire Global Inc.; TeleCommunication Systems, Inc.; Telesat Canada; TrustComm, Inc.; Ultisat, Inc.; and XTAR, LLC.

1. Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Space *Assets,* Article XXX – Identification of space assets for registration purposes

The Cape Town Convention also requires the unique identification of a space asset before an international interest can be constituted and registered. There has been much debate and confusion over how a space asset will be identified and defined. Indeed, many of the core identification criteria for registration are meaningless in providing certainty of identification both before and after launch.

# ITU as Supervisory Authority

The ITU secretariat fulfills a very necessary and important role in the international framework for communications, and satellites by their nature have an international focus. However, SIA is concerned that the ITU’s assumption of the Supervisory Authority role would be a distraction, at least at the senior management level, from the important core and priority role of the secretariat.

Moreover, SIA firmly believes an early endorsement of the ITU becoming Supervisory

Authority by the Council pre-empts the responsibilities of the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-18) decision in 2018, suggesting concurrence for development of the registry before it has been approved. Given the concerns raised in this letter by SIA, an endorsement now would effectively be discarding the viewpoint of a substantial number of satellite operators.

SIA respectfully requests that Council continue to monitor and respond to any questions raised by the Member States regarding the International Registry for Space Assets but refrain from endorsement of the ITU as Supervisory Authority for said registry so as to not pre-empt continuing dialogue with industry or the decision of the next Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018.

Sincerely,

/s/

Tom Stroup

President

Satellite Industry Association