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**Country: Switzerland**

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**Topic: Revising the Outer Space Treaty**

“As we aim for the stars, let us not overlook the lessons of history but instead wield a new narrative of cooperation, innovation and shared destiny.”

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 still remains the main governing legislation over space exploration. The treaty bans the stationing of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in outer space, prohibits military activities on celestial bodies, and details legally binding rules governing the peaceful exploration and use of space. Since its inception in 1958, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has been dedicated to fostering peaceful collaboration in outer space endeavors. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland vigorously advocates on the international stage for the peaceful, safe, and sustainable utilization of outer space, a commitment firmly entrenched within Switzerland's foreign and space policies. Renowned as a bridge builder in space diplomacy, Switzerland leverages its membership in COPUOS since 2008 to foster enhanced cooperation and governance of space activities.

Through the provision of scientific expertise and facilitation of consensus-building, Switzerland actively promotes the establishment of common standards and guidelines. Swiss engagement in space research predominantly revolves around projects under the auspices of the European Space Agency (ESA), a testament to Switzerland's extensive involvement in ESA's development since its inception. The Federal Council plans on expenditures of around CHF 29.2 billion/31.9 billion USD in the 2025–2028 ERI Dispatch. Swiss technology has emerged as a crucial cornerstone in the realm of space exploration, showcasing its significance through pioneering contributions and cutting-edge advancements. Their technological expertise is evident in missions across our solar system. For instance, the Omega Speedmaster watch, a reliable timepiece worn on the moon during the Apollo 11 mission, is a Swiss product and it is standard equipment for NASA astronauts. Similarly, Swiss Maxon motors helped power the Mars Pathfinder rover on its groundbreaking journey, University of Bern developed an ultra-stable light source for testing NASA's TESS space telescope, the design of the first human-conducted experiment on the Moon and the use of Velcro in aerospace. The applied research company CSEM – the Swiss Centre for Electronics and Microtechnology is an important player in the space exploration community by providing highly precise scientific instrumentation for satellites and telescopes. Switzerland is home to several academic and research institutions that are actively involved in space exploration, such as EPFL Space Innovation, EPFL eSpace, EPFL Laboratory of Astrophysics, ETHZ Space, ESA BIC Switzerland, and the International Space Studies Institute, ISSI. These institutions have been pivotal in advancing space exploration, with projects like CHEOPS, SwissCube, ClearSpace, and ExoMars. Participation in the ISS and Lunar Gateway demonstrates the nation's commitment and leadership potential in global space endeavors.

The space sector faces a significant gender gap, with only 1 in 5 workers being women, according to the UN. Closing this gap is vital for diversity, equality, innovation and space exploration. Strategies include promoting gender equality, improving data collection, and adapting approaches to local contexts. Centering lived experiences, addressing intersectionality, and fostering education and mentorship are crucial. Leading diversity-focused events and advocating for mainstreamed diversity approaches can further advance gender equality. The Space4Women program's widespread enactment is essential. Addressing challenges in international cooperation in outer space requires strengthening multilateral institutions, developing a shared global vision, involving civil society and the private sector, and addressing dual-use technologies and space debris. Solutions also include capacity-building, technical assistance, multilateral dialogue, clear international agreements, and establishing management structures for station use. These efforts aim to promote responsible behavior, build trust, and enhance cooperation, contributing to peaceful space exploration. The delegate of Switzerland believes that Switzerland's collaborative, innovative, diverse, research-oriented, and economically beneficial qualities make it an ideal candidate to lead a global space exploration organization and this is the need of the hour.

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