

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

as the Council is aware Near Earth Objects pose a threat to the global community, although the probability for the short-term is rather theoretical. Nonetheless, an impact is only a matter of time, thousands or even millions of years perhaps but the consequences can be of such dimensions that our delegation believes we should be aware and prepared for the improbable.

The damage done by a NEO impact depends on many factors, like size, speed, composition, impact location, etc. An impact, even if limited to local or regional damage will undoubtedly affect many people in adjacent areas or coastal lines in case of an ocean impact. Many of the affected will be youth. With half the world's population being under 25 years of age, everything of potentially global scale consequences, clearly must also be a youth issue.

We fully support the efforts undertaken by various entities to conduct observations to detect NEOs and missions being planned by various space agencies to find out more about the nature of Near Earth Objects as well as investigate possible mitigation strategies.

The Space Generation Advisory Council conducted a survey to assess the awareness among its members and to gather a more solid idea what the opinion of youth around the globe is concerning Near Earth Objects. While mainly intended to gather information, the survey was also thought to increase awareness and knowledge among global youth. It was designed so that a person with no previous knowledge about Near Earth Objects would understand the basics of the situation. To do so, some of the statements used were reduced in scientific accuracy and brought down to a simple statement that still captured the core issue without compromising the true nature of the problem involved. The survey was structured into six parts reflecting on different aspects of the issue.

This slide shows the personal background of the youth who took the survey. Two thirds of the responses came from Europe and North, Central America and the Caribbean while the rest of the world's regions are more or less equally represented. 75% are aged between 19 and 29, while more than half are space professionals.

In “The threat of NEOs” part the goal was to evaluate the general awareness level on Near Earth Objects among global youth. As you can see most of the surveyed persons are aware of Near Earth Objects and the threat they potentially pose. It should be noted that even among space professionals NEO awareness is not 100%.

To evaluate further what the perceived threat of an impact is, this brief overview was given on what the current estimates are in regard to NEO size and damage done and in what time frame they can be expected. Summarizing, large Near Earth Objects impact much less frequently than small ones. Most persons did not believe there is an immediate threat but did not want to rule out the possibility of an impact during their lifetime.

The next part of the survey intended to find out what the awareness and knowledge base about “Mitigation Strategies” was. The results show that two thirds were not aware of the current status of the first part in the chain to mitigation – namely, observation and detection. Two thirds knew that under the right conditions, a NEO impact can be avoided. Almost 90% of global youth are aware about the existence of mitigation strategies and almost 100% think NEOs should be deflected if they threaten to hit Earth.

The “Global Governance” part was intended to inform survey takers about the current situation as well as gather their opinion on the establishment of an international legal framework. While a third is not aware of the current situation for dealing with NEO threats on global or national levels, over

90% are in favour of a legal framework that would clarify who decides, conducts, pays and is liable for a deflection mission and its consequences. The activities of the Association of Space Explorers to draft such a legal framework within this Working Group is supported by an equally high number of youth.

“Youth Involvement” probed the opinion of youth whether they feel the NEO issue concerns youth. While three fourth agree, over 90% think that youth should get more involved.

A concluding voluntary “Comments” box was used by roughly one third of the participating persons. Half of those stressed the importance of education and outreach efforts to raise awareness on the issue. A quarter of all comments explicitly welcomed an international approach towards the matter and 10% think more research is needed on Near Earth Objects.

Concluding, The Space Generation Advisory Council is supporting the activities of the Association of Space Explorers to draft a UN Protocol on NEO Deflection within Action Team 14 on Near Earth Objects. SGAC is planning a follow-up survey which focuses more on in-depths questions and is also looking for additional ways to engage youth in this matter.

Further SGAC provides a portal on the issue through the SGAC NEO Project Page on <http://www.spacegeneration.org/neo> where interested youth can get involved by learning and discussing more about the issue.

Thank you for your attention.