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Thank you Chair, distinguished delegates and representatives, I am grateful to have this opportunity to share with the Legal Subcommittee some information about the activities of For All Moonkind relating to space law. First, I would like to express our appreciation of your leadership and our gratitude for the incredible work of the Secretariat and the entire staff of the Office of Outer Space Affairs. We are thankful for all the kind assistance and guidance we are always provided.

Distinguished delegates, I am pleased to share with you the work of For All Moonkind's Institute on Space Law and Ethics. This new Institute offers a natural progression of For All Moonkind's commitment to responsible space exploration and behaviors. For All Moonkind is the only organization in the world that is focused on achieving the recognition of, and appropriate protections for, human heritage sites in outer space. In so doing, we seek to balance the protection of important cultural heritage sites with the exploration and utilization of space and its resources.

Distinguished delegates, humans have succeeded in building thriving communities on Earth, but not without strife. Our expansion into the rest of space presents challenges and risks unlike any humans have ever faced. Some of these can be predicted, however, there will be many that will only become evident as we pursue the exploration of space. These will test our current ethical constructs in unpredictable ways and it is unlikely that the law will keep up. This fascinating prospect affords humanity a unique opportunity to enhance the human experience both on Earth and beyond and set an example for future generations.

The mission of the Institute on Space Law and Ethics is to ensure that ethical considerations continuously serve a foundational role in shaping the legal and normative frameworks governing the exploration and use of outer space, with the goal of enhancing mutual understanding, transparency, trust and the sustainable use of space and its resources for the benefit of all humankind while minimizing misunderstandings and the potential for conflict.

To support this end, the Institute has articulated a statement on the relationship between law and ethics. Ethics ought to have a bearing on the foundation of law. It should be recognized as an enabler of, and not a constraint on, the exploration and use of space. Ethics derive from our understanding of our historical context, including our diverse geopolitical and social communities. Ethics parallel the course of our evolution and will evolve as our knowledge and technology advance. The basis and structure of future laws should derive from evolving ethics, as considered and discerned from broad multicultural perspectives. We do not seek to impose an ethical standard; however, we can articulate and develop agreed standards upon which to shape the law.

One of our most important goals is to raise awareness and amplify voices in space to assure that ethical standards take into consideration broad multicultural viewpoints.

For example, earlier this year, a payload intended for the Moon included the remains – or part of the remains – of a number of humans. That payload did not make it to the Moon. However, there are already human remains on the lunar surface. Some of the ashes of Eugene Shoemaker were sent to the Moon on Lunar Prospector in 1999. The Navajo Nation, an indigenous community located in the United States, has formally objected to this practice. In so doing, they raise very important considerations and concerns.

Like many Indigenous communities, the Navajo people feel the Moon is sacred and want to limit lunar expeditions to purely scientific missions that preserve the Moon's natural environment. The Navajo Nation has repeatedly stated that no one owns the Moon, but stresses that all actions taken there affect everyone. And it's true, what happens in space affects all humanity. Doesn't all humanity, then deserve to have a say?

The leadership of For All Moonkind's Institute on Space Law and Ethics believe indigenous perspectives need to be considered when decisions are being made that will govern humankind's activities beyond Earth. And indeed, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires it. That Declaration indicates that governments should work with indigenous communities to "obtain their free, prior and informed consent" before adopting a policy that may affect them.

Distinguished delegates, this is not about religion or about what is right and what is wrong. I stress that no matter how you feel about the Navajo statement regarding the use of the Moon and its resources, you cannot deny that indigenous people need to have a seat at the table. For All Moonkind's Institute on Space Law and Ethics is committed to helping indigenous and other underserved communities share their perspectives. In addition to considering ethical foundations, the Institute will also raise public awareness of, broaden civil discourse on, and, most importantly, encourage public support for all space activities. We welcome your inquiries and thoughts.

I thank you for your kind attention.

For more information about For All Moonkind's Institute on Space Law and Ethics please visit: <https://www.forallmoonkind.org/institute>