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**Committee on the Peaceful
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Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Sixtieth session
Vienna, 6–17 February 2023
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*
Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

**A practical and inclusive approach to identifying and
studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines**

**Conference room paper submitted by Canada, Italy, Japan,
Luxembourg, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland and the United States of America**

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* [A/AC.105/C.1/L.405](#).



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A practical and inclusive approach to identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines.

Paper Submitted by: Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States.

1. Following a decade of discussions, the agreement in 2019 of the 21 Guidelines on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was an important milestone in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The 21 Guidelines contain important recommendations for States on a variety of issues such as safe space operations, research and development, international cooperation, capacity-building, as well as national policy and regulation. We now have a comprehensive set of Guidelines which provide insights into the practical steps that can be taken to enhance the sustainability of outer space activities. With the establishment of the second Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities “LTS 2.0,” there is an opportunity for member states to turn theory into practice.

2. Under the terms of reference (A/AC.105/1258, annex II, appendix) the Working Group should produce a report on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities that contains multiple elements, including inter alia, information on identification and study of challenges, experiences practices and lessons learned from voluntary implementation, and information and recommendations for capacity-building as well as future activities and work by the Subcommittee. Given the breadth of these Guidelines and the rapid pace of development, it is likely that new challenges will emerge in areas not previously considered by the Guidelines. These gaps and challenges will be revealed through implementation and putting theory into practice. As we have seen in the discussions held at the informal sessions of LTS 2.0 Working Group, the Guidelines are multi-faceted, and many member states have described different approaches and understanding of how to implement the Guidelines. Furthermore, the challenges encountered may be different for established and emerging space nations due to their different capabilities or national legislation. Therefore, building on reporting

implementation we may be able to highlight two types of challenges, areas where Guidelines exist but there are an issues with their application (e.g. registration, international coordination etc) or new areas or themes that do not adequately fit within the existing guidelines.

3. Notably, the challenges faced by some delegations may have been resolved, or not yet encountered by others, highlighting the value and need for an open and inclusive dialogue. To progress and complement the work of “LTS 1.0”, the Working Group should focus on next steps rather than amending or revising previously adopted Guidelines. The identification of possible new guidelines should instead be informed by the identification and study of new and existing challenges. The dialogue will reveal common areas where we may seek to recommend specific future work or suggest possible new guidelines. The further work could include dedicated deep-dives on common challenge, workshops or compilations of best practice. We see this step of discussion of topics and/or themes of challenges as a key step towards the development of the substantive content of possible new guidelines, which may be captured and appear in the output of this Working Group.

4. The output of the LTS 2.0 Working Group is clearly set-forth in the established terms of reference, methods of work and workplan. Furthermore, A/AC.105/1258, annex II, appendix notes that discussion within the Working Group should be sequential, non-simultaneous and balanced, giving equal importance and an equitable amount of time to each of the three elements of the workplan. The Terms of Reference contemplates that the “identification and study of new challenges,[...] as well as possible new guidelines would be compiled in the final report of the Working Group as recommendations for future work.

5. For this Working Group the discussion of possible areas of new guidelines should not disrupt the balanced approach noted above to advancing the consensus-based workplan. The identification of possible new guidelines is only one element within identification and study of challenges, and corresponding recommendations. One potential method for compiling information on recommendations for possible areas of new guidelines within the final report would be to include an overview of possible new guidelines which could include details on the challenges and proposals about how to address them. This could be grouped by subject-matter/thematic area, focused on safety and sustainability to remain within COPUOS’s mandate).

6. In the interest of maintaining a balanced dialogue on all three elements of the Working Group’s method of work and workplan, this compilation should not seek to address the specific draft text of possible new guidelines. The scope of the workplan does not provide a basis for negotiation of additional guidelines beyond the 21 Guidelines adopted in 2019. Negotiating consensus text would require significant time and detract from

other crucial elements under consideration by the Working Group, such as the development of practical tools to implement the existing Guidelines and identifying capacity-building needs. A compilation comprised of possible subject-matter/thematic areas for new guidelines could then be brought forward as recommendations on future activities and work within the final report.

7. The LTS 2.0 Working Group contains representatives from a diverse array of space-faring nations from well-established to those in the initial stages of leveraging space capabilities. The November 2022 and February 2023 informal sessions featured positive, constructive and informative discussions on the rapid evolution of space activities, for example in relation to the current guideline on registration of space objects (A.5). There is power in this diversity and we encourage all members to actively participate and share their views to advance these dynamic and constructive discussions. It is through this type of dialogue that members of the Working Group can identify shared challenges and learn about possible solutions through sharing knowledge and experiences.