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Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

**Written contribution of the Moon Village Association for
the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of
Outer Space Activities**

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Written contribution of the Moon Village Association for the Working Group of the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

8 January 2024

The Moon Village Association (MVA) considers that the long-term sustainability of outer space activities should be of a permanent concern for all member States, for governmental and non-governmental space actors. At the same time, the MVA considers that Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities must be extended to the activities conducted in connection with other celestial bodies, in particular to the Moon.

The near future will see a multitude of lunar missions through the efforts of both space agencies and commercial stakeholders' efforts. The current lack of coordination mechanisms for lunar activities presents a serious challenge to future missions and could lead to dangerous conflicts, especially in light of the increased global interest in specific areas like the lunar south pole. The need to preserve the peaceful uses of space, together with the desire to begin a new era of sustainable space exploration, urges the development of lunar governance or a common level playing field for upcoming lunar activities.

A number of relevant issues will need to be defined in detail to ensure sustainable lunar exploration and settlement in and around the Moon, including, for example, benefits sharing, sharing of information, registration of activities, mitigating the creation of debris in lunar orbit, and regulating access to natural resources.

In 2019, the Moon Village Association (MVA) took the initiative to address these critical issues with the goal of de-risking future lunar missions and increasing global cooperation for lunar exploration and settlement. The initial work of the MVA resulted in the publication of the first edition of its *Best Practices for Sustainable Lunar Activities* on 5 March 2020 for public consultation.

The positive feedback received on the Best Practices initiative from several space agencies encouraged the MVA to continue its endeavours in fostering a global discussion on sustainable lunar activities. Therefore, the MVA decided to promote the development of a neutral forum for multi-stakeholder discussions on lunar exploration: The *Global Expert Group on Sustainable Lunar Activities* (or GEGSLA).

In January 2023 MVA published the work of GEGSLA that is "Recommended Framework and Key elements for Peaceful and Sustainable Lunar Activities".

The GEGSLA Framework, developed through a comprehensive process involving diverse global stakeholders, offers a nuanced and practical approach to the challenges and opportunities presented by lunar activities.

Key to the GEGSLA Framework's relevance is its foundational alignment with pre-existing key documents, including MVA Best Practices, the Hague Building Blocks, and the United Nations Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. This alignment ensures a cohesive and integrated

approach to sustainable lunar exploration and usage, addressing areas such as information-sharing, safe operations, lunar environmental protection, interoperability, and governance.

The increasing interest in lunar exploration, particularly in regions like the lunar south pole, highlights the need for robust and dynamic coordination mechanisms. The GEGSLA Framework provides a basis for such mechanisms, advocating for increased coordination and addressing the evolving challenges of lunar missions. This approach is vital in ensuring that lunar activities are conducted responsibly, sustainably, and in a manner that benefits all humanity.

In the operational phase, the MVA is focusing on promoting the implementation of the GEGSLA Framework within the broader space community. This includes facilitating discussions within the Committee, sharing information on ongoing lunar missions, and engaging in a broader dialogue on international lunar coordination.

In conclusion, the MVA urges the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities to recognize that lunar activities are a key element of its activities and suggest that the principles and recommendations of the GEGSLA Framework Document be considered as a starting point for a United Nations-led coordination of these issues. The framework can serve not only as a guideline for sustainable lunar activities but also as a catalyst for establishing effective lunar coordination mechanisms, essential for the long-term sustainability and peaceful use of outer space.

Annexes:

1. GEGSLA Framework Document: <https://moonvillageassociation.org/gegsla/documents/gegsla-recommended-framework/>
2. Report of the Moon Village Association on the Global Expert Group on Sustainable Lunar Activities – Status/Plan, presented at the Sixty-sixth session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 31 May–9 June 2023, A/AC.105/2023/CRP.9: www.unoosa.org/oosa/oesadoc/data/documents/2023/aac.1052023crp/aac.1052023crp.9_0.html