



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN VIENNA**

COPUOS LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE

60TH SESSION

Agenda Item 14: General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources

STATEMENT BY GREECE

Mme Chair,

As this is the first time that our delegation is taking the floor, allow us to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election and wishing you success in your important task. We are confident that under your leadership the Committee will make further steps towards the implementation of its goals. We take also the opportunity to commend the Director of the UNOOSA, Ms Simonetta di Pippo and her Office, and in particular the Committee's Secretary, Mr. Niklas Hedman and his team for their important work and assistance.

Over the last few years, there has been an intense debate on the development of activities related to the exploration, exploitation and utilization of outer space resources. Greece has been actively involved on the matter and strongly believes that any such activities need a solid and unequivocal legal framework.

The issue of potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources had already been discussed during the fifty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee, in 2018, and, at that time, Greece was introduced the idea of establishing a dedicated ad hoc working group on space resources. Following a series of informal inter-sessional consultations, a common Working Paper by Belgium and Greece was submitted to the Legal Subcommittee during its 58th session in 2019 (A/AC.105/C.2/L.311),¹ entitled "*Proposal for the establishment of a Working Group for the development of an international regime for the utilization and exploitation of space resources,*" followed by an additional one² on the Working methods and Work Plan of the proposed WG. The two drafters made an extensive reference to the relevant principles of international space law in force, such as indicatively, the exploration and use of outer space as the province of all humankind and the international character of the governance of outer space activities and

¹ A/AC.105/C.2/L.311.

² A/AC.105/C.2/2019/CRP.22.

stressed, among others that, given the current state of play of the space resource industry and the fragmented nature of technical, economic and scientific information concerning space resources, they deem it indispensable that legal discussions should start within UN COPUOS, as being the primary forum for intergovernmental discussions and negotiations on the future regime for space resource exploitation. In their additional WP, a comprehensive work plan and timetable was provided.

Greece would like to welcome the outcome of the discussions held in 2019, during the 58th Session of the Legal Subcommittee in respect to the said proposal by Greece and Belgium. As reflected in the Report of that Session, the Legal Subcommittee "...agreed that *scheduled informal consultations* were to be held at its 59th session, in 2020, and be coordinated by a moderator, who would be nominated by Greece and Belgium at the 62nd Session of COPUOS. The Legal Subcommittee had also agreed that the aim of those consultations was to have a broad and inclusive exchange of views on the future deliberations concerning the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, ***including the possible establishment of a working group under the relevant agenda item.***³ In this context, Greece and Belgium nominated as moderator of the *scheduled informal consultations* Ambassador Andrzej Misztal and, as co-moderator, Professor Steven Freeland, given their experience as well as constructive and consensual presence within the Legal Subcommittee.

In view of the above, we are happy to introduce at the current session of the LSC, together with Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Spain and Czech Republic, a new WP on the *the establishment of a working group for the development of an international framework for the utilization and exploitation of space resources*, which builds upon the Greco-Belgian Working Paper and could positively enrich the relevant debate within the Legal Subcommittee, including its scheduled informal consultations.

Mme Chair,

We believe that, at present, there is an increasing need to advance the substantial debate on the issue of potential legal models on exploration, exploitation and utilization of outer space resources. This is clear if we take into account that the domain of space activities has, at this stage, been differentiated in its characteristics in comparison with the past. The dynamic emergence of the private sector in outer space activities is an undeniable fact and creates new challenges. It follows that there must be a considerable mitigation of legal risk and, thus, a specific international legal framework would be a decisive factor to encourage the huge investment projects that are indispensable for the exploration and utilization of space resources.

In light of the above, the establishment of a Working Group, with a well-defined scope of work and timeline, can decisively contribute and provide the necessary legal responses. We really hope that during the scheduled informals that will take place under the wise guidance of the co-moderators, the members of the LSC will have the opportunity to discuss all possible legal options and consider positively the option of establishing a Working Group on space resources.

³ Paras 278-280 of A/AC.105/1203.

Thank you Mme Chair