

## **Proposal on a Consultative Mechanism on Lunar Activities**

### **Non-Paper submitted by the Delegation of Romania**

1. The near future will see a multitude of lunar missions through the efforts of both space agencies and commercial stakeholders. The current lack of cooperation mechanisms for lunar activities presents a serious challenge to future missions and could lead to harmful interference, 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 a common level playing field for upcoming lunar activities.

2. A number of issues must be addressed to ensure sustainable lunar exploration and settlement in and around the Moon, including for lunar operators to share information on their ongoing and planned operations and to engage in consultations in order to coordinate operations, facilitate interoperability, improve safety, avoiding interference, protecting the lunar environment, mitigating the creation of debris in lunar orbit, regulating access to natural resources, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and building capabilities, identifying common needs and concerns of lunar operators.

3. An international consultative mechanism on sustainable lunar activities could facilitate addressing numerous issues facing future missions and such a mechanism could be studied within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). To facilitate the examination on such a consultative mechanism, it is proposed that an **Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC)** under the Committee is established for this purpose.

4. Such a mechanism could assist in resolving a multiplicity of technical and operational issues that could be faced by lunar operators, some of which are described here:

- **Landing site coordination and lunar dust mitigation:** Sites suitable for landing in the south pole of the Moon are quite limited. As multiple lunar operators plan to send probes to the south pole, the mechanism could serve a platform for sharing plans for lunar south pole landing and coordinating selection of landing sites. Furthermore, the lunar dust generated by landing and takeoff operations pose a serious challenge to the adjacent operators and will necessitate the development of best practices of dust mitigation which can be shared through the mechanism.
- **Cislunar traffic:** With multiple missions and stakeholders operating in lunar orbit and on the lunar surface, there is a pressing need to coordinate traffic to avoid collisions and conflicts. The sharing of information regarding the location and timing of cislunar operations can help prevent collisions, reduce risks to spacecraft and astronauts, and streamline operations where efficient traffic management can lead to smoother mission execution.
- **Space resources:** Natural resources on the Moon, such as water ice, will be essential for the support a long-term human presence. As these resources are limited and concentrated in particular areas, sharing information regarding resource activity will be critical for avoiding conflict or harmful interference.
- **Debris mitigation:** Increasing lunar activities may result in the generation of



space debris that poses risks to lunar missions. Such debris could be located in lunar orbit as well as on the surface of the Moon. By sharing best practices for debris mitigation, this threat can be minimized. In addition, sharing information regarding the existence and location of debris will help ensure the safety of operations. The work carried out by the mechanism could also assist ongoing debris mitigation efforts, such as those undertaken by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC).

- **Protection of sites of significant scientific interest and lunar heritage:** The opportunity to share information regarding the nature and location of lunar sites of significant scientific or cultural significance will assist in the identification and protection of such sites.

To perform this feasibility assessment of such a mechanism an **Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC)** is proposed to be organized as soon as possible at the level of UN COPUOS and its subcommittees.

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