



The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Office is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and assisting developing countries in using space science and technology. Located in Vienna, Austria, UNOOSA maintains a web-site at:

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A large graphic on the right side of the page features the number '50' in a large, semi-transparent font. Below it, the text '50 years of Space Achievements' is written in a white, serif font. The background is a blue-tinted image of Earth from space, with a bright starburst effect in the upper right corner.

50 years of Space Achievements

UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

The United Nations has played a major role in the peaceful uses of outer space since the launch of the first man-made satellite "Sputnik-1" in 1957. Recognizing the impact that peaceful uses of outer space would have on humanity, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in 1959. In 1962, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was established to assist COPUOS in its work.

COPUOS provides a dedicated forum for States and organizations to discuss issues related to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Since its establishment, the Committee has organized three global United Nations Conferences on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE) in 1968, 1982 and 1999.

COPUOS has developed five international treaties and five legal principles governing the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

This body of international law asserts that outer space, the Moon and other celestial bodies cannot be owned by any nation; prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space; elaborates on the safety, recovery and rescue of spacecraft and astronauts; provides for the notification and registration of space objects; encourages scientific investigation and the use of space technology for development; and defines mechanisms for the settlement of disputes resulting from damage caused by space objects.

COPUOS annually reviews present and future space activities for the possible further development of space law. It has two subcommittees: the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to deal with technical issues and the Legal Subcommittee to discuss legal issues. Presently, COPUOS is discussing matters that include assisting developing nations in the use of space technology, space technology for disaster management, guidelines to reduce man-made space debris, the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space, and research on near Earth objects.

COPUOS includes 67 member States, the organizations of the United Nations System and 20 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Committee and its Subcommittees meet annually at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

