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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space**  
**Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**  
**Fiftieth session**  
Vienna, 11-22 February 2013

## **Draft report of the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities**

1. In accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 67/113, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fiftieth session, reconvened its Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.
2. The Working Group held five meetings, from 12 to 21 February 2013, under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa).
3. In accordance with its terms of reference and methods of work, the Working Group had before it the following:
  - (a) Note by the Secretariat on experiences and practices related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/104 and A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.15);
  - (b) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation and Ukraine on technology safeguards associated with cooperation in the field of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in the development and operation of space rockets and rocket equipment (A/AC.105/C.1/L.322);
  - (c) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/L.285);
  - (d) Working papers prepared by expert groups A-D of the Working Group (A/AC.105/C.1/L.324, A/AC.105/C.1/L.325, A/AC.105/C.1/L.326 and A/AC.105/C.1/L.327);
  - (e) Conference room papers containing the preliminary draft reports and proposed candidate guidelines prepared by expert groups A-D of the Working Group (A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.11, A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.12, A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.13 and A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.14);

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(f) Conference room paper containing a progress report by the Chair of the Working Group (A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.10);

(g) Conference room paper containing a list of points of contact for the Working Group and members of expert groups A-D (A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.18).

4. The Working Group recalled the dedicated web page established by the Secretariat ([www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/stsc/lts/index.html](http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/stsc/lts/index.html)) to facilitate the sharing of information on the work being conducted by the Working Group and its four expert groups, and noted that the access details for that web page had been communicated to all permanent missions to the United Nations (Vienna) of States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to the national points of contact of the Working Group.

5. At the first meeting, the Chair of the Working Group presented a report on the intersessional progress made since the forty-ninth session of the Subcommittee, held in February 2012. The Working Group noted that the four expert groups had held informal coordination meetings on the margins of the fifty-fifth session of the Committee in June 2012, and the sixty-third International Astronautical Congress, held in Naples, Italy, in October 2012. The reports of those informal coordination meetings had been made available on the web page referred to above.

6. The Working Group also noted that all four expert groups were meeting on the margins of the current session of the Subcommittee to further consider their draft reports and proposed candidate guidelines.

7. In accordance with the decision taken by the Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the Subcommittee concerning reports of the expert groups and information flow from the expert groups to the Working Group (A/AC.105/1001, annex IV, para. 16), the Chair invited the co-chairs of the expert groups to introduce the preliminary draft expert group reports and the proposed candidate guidelines that were to be considered by the expert groups at the current session of the Subcommittee. The Chair also introduced the conference room paper containing a progress report by the Chair of the Working Group, which included a proposal for the structure of the report of the Working Group (see A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.10, annex).

8. At its second meeting, on 14 February 2012, the Working Group noted that the Chair would compile, as soon as possible after the end of the fiftieth session of the Subcommittee, the set of candidate guidelines proposed by the four expert groups, as at 15 February 2013, for translation into all official languages of the United Nations. That document would be produced for the purpose of assisting delegations in giving their considered views on the emerging candidate guidelines and in guiding the expert groups and the Chair of the Working Group in drafting the report of the Working Group. The Working Group also considered the proposal of the Chair on the structure of the report of the Working Group. Comments were received on that proposed structure.

9. The Working Group noted with appreciation the workshop that had been held on 14 February 2013, in accordance with its multi-year workplan. A brief report on the workshop is contained in the appendix to the present report. The presentations made during the workshop are found on the web page of the Office for Outer Space

Affairs, under the page dedicated to the fiftieth session of the Subcommittee, as well as on the page dedicated to the Working Group.

10. At the third meeting of the Working Group, on 18 February 2013, the Chair of the Working Group invited the chair of the group of governmental experts on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities to present its activities to the Working Group. The presentation was given in accordance with paragraph 16 of the terms of reference and methods of work (A/66/20, annex II), which mandated the Working Group to invite contributions from States members of the Committee, as well as to invite contributions from and/or consider and decide on appropriate liaison with United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including the group of governmental experts. The presentation by the chair of that group highlighted the complementary nature of those two United Nations processes. The chair of the group of governmental experts also shared a document with the Working Group, outlining the principal elements of the work of the group of governmental experts.

11. At its fourth meeting, on 19 February 2013, the Working Group noted that the co-chairs of the expert groups had proposed to meet on the margins of and/or during the fifty-sixth session of the Committee, to be held in Vienna in June 2013.

12. The Working Group recalled that the Committee, at its fifty-fifth session, in 2012, had agreed that the Secretariat should schedule the work of the Committee at its next session, in 2013, in such a manner as to enable the Working Group to benefit from interpretation services (A/67/20, para. 348). In that regard, the Working Group noted that its Chair would consult with the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat regarding the scheduling of the session of the Committee in 2013.

13. The Working Group recommended that the Committee, at its fifty-sixth session, in 2013, should consider whether the set of recommended guidelines should require review by the Legal Subcommittee before endorsement by the Committee, in accordance with the agreement by the Committee at its fifty-second session, in 2009 (A/64/20, para. 162).

14. In accordance with what was agreed by the Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/1001, annex IV, para. 16), the expert groups held a joint meeting on 15 February 2013. During that meeting, the co-chairs of the expert groups presented the current status of their work and the progress that had been made at the current session, while also highlighting some overlaps in the emerging candidate guidelines that would need to be addressed as the guidelines were consolidated into the final report of the Working Group.

15. At its fifth meeting, on 21 February 2013, the Working Group adopted the present report.

## Appendix

### **Report on the workshop organized by the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities on 14 February 2013**

In accordance with the multi-year workplan for the Working Group, member States of the Committee were invited to include in their delegations representatives of national non-governmental organizations and of private sector entities having experience in space activities to provide information on their experiences and practices in the conduct of sustainable space activities at a workshop to be held in conjunction with the fiftieth session of the Subcommittee.

The organization of the workshop was undertaken by the Chair of the Working Group in consultation with the co-chairs of the expert groups and the national points of contact of the Working Group. Delegations were requested to propose presentations for the workshop through their national points of contact.

The aim of the workshop was to create an opportunity for national non-governmental organizations and private sector entities to present information on their experiences as inputs for consideration by the expert groups in formulating their conclusions and recommendations to the Working Group.

The following presentations were delivered:

(a) “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities: a satellite industry perspective”, by Patricia Cooper, Satellite Industry Association (United States); Aarti Holla, European Satellite Operators Association (Belgium); and Stewart Sanders, Space Delta Association (United Kingdom);

(b) “International Organization for Standardization space standards”, by Fredrick Slane, Space Infrastructure Foundation (United States);

(c) “China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation efforts on dealing with space debris towards space long-term sustainability”, by Zinhen Gong, China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (China);

(d) “The Japanese space industry’s efforts regarding long-term sustainability of space activities”, by Shigeyoshi Hata, Society of Japanese Aerospace Companies (Japan);

(e) “Eutelsat practice and views on long-term sustainability”, by Marion Petitjean and David Zamora, Eutelsat (France);

(f) Statement on long-term sustainability, by Laurent Jourdainne, Arianespace (France).

Presenters emphasized that the space industry had several decades of experience operating in the space environment and that private sector investments in space activities were long-term investments that provided essential services for society. The private sector therefore had a strong interest in promoting responsible uses of outer space to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

It was noted that industry associations played a significant role in promoting the long-term sustainability of outer space activities through promoting cooperation

and information exchange. Such associations were already providing channels for information exchange among satellite operators on an operational basis.

The importance of standards or guidelines supporting the long-term sustainability of space activities was emphasized. In some cases, there were already existing standards or guidelines that could be more widely promoted and adopted. For example, it was noted that the existing Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space were already observed by a number of space operators.

It was noted that industry also played a role in the development of technologies and operational practices to promote the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Examples were given of research and development activities in industry in the realm of space debris impact effects and mitigation. Examples of operator practices in satellite relocation and end-of-life passivation and disposal procedures were also highlighted.

In addition, examples of national laws were presented, some of which included provisions for the protection of the space environment. Other national statutory practices that could support the long-term sustainability of space activities included pre-manoeuve notifications, impact avoidance plans and end-of-life disposal strategies. However, it was important to consider industry inputs and perspectives in the development of regulatory frameworks and to allow industry operators sufficient time to implement new regulatory provisions.

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