

UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL  
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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE  
Legal Sub-Committee

UNITED STATES: PROPOSAL

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT

ON

ASSISTANCE TO AND RETURN OF ASTRONAUTS

AND

OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE

The Contracting Parties,

Recognizing the common interest of mankind in furthering the peaceful uses of outer space,

Recalling the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, adopted by the General Assembly on December 13, 1963, as resolution 1962 (XVIII),

Considering that the personnel of spacecraft may from time to time be the subject of accident or experience conditions of distress,

Considering that there may occur landings of objects launched into outer space, and their personnel in the case of manned spacecraft, by reason of accident, distress or mistake,

Wishing to do their utmost to assist the personnel of spacecraft in such cases and to provide for the return of objects launched into outer space, and

Believing that in such circumstances the action of States should be governed by common humanitarian concern and with due regard for scientific needs,  
Agree as follows:

Article 1

1. A Contracting Party which discovers that the personnel of a spacecraft have met with accident or are experiencing conditions of distress, or have made an emergency landing, shall notify without delay the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching, or the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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2. A Contracting Party which discovers that an object launched into outer space or parts thereof have returned to Earth shall notify without delay the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching, or the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 2

1. Unless otherwise requested by the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching, each Contracting Party shall take all possible steps to assist or rescue promptly the personnel of spacecraft who are the subject of accident or experience conditions of distress or who may make emergency landings by reason of accident, distress, or mistake. Such steps shall include a joint search by those Contracting Parties which may be in a position to conduct search and rescue operations in the event personnel of a spacecraft are presumed to have made an emergency landing on the high seas or Antarctica.

2. Each Contracting Party shall permit, subject to control by its own authorities, the authorities of the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching to provide measures of assistance as may be necessitated by the circumstances.

Article 3

1. A Contracting Party shall return the personnel of a spacecraft who have made an emergency landing by reason of accident, distress or mistake promptly and safely to the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching.

2. Upon request by the State of registry or international organization responsible for launching, a Contracting Party shall return to that State or international organization an object launched into outer space or parts thereof that have returned to Earth. Such State or international organization shall, upon request, furnish identifying data.

Article 4

Any dispute arising from the interpretation or application of this Agreement may be referred by any Contracting Party thereto to the International Court of Justice for decision.

Article 5

A Contracting Party may propose amendments to this Agreement. Amendments shall come into force for each Contracting Party accepting the amendments on acceptance by a majority of the Contracting Parties and thereafter for each remaining Contracting Party on acceptance by it.

Article 6

Any Contracting Party may give notice of its withdrawal from this Agreement two years after its entry into force by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Such withdrawal shall take effect one year from the date of receipt by the Secretary-General of the notification.

Article 7

This Agreement shall be open for signature by States Members of the United Nations or of any of the specialized agencies or Parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, and by any other State invited by the General Assembly of the United Nations to become a party. Any such State which does not sign this Agreement may accede to it at any time.

Article 8

This Agreement shall be subject to ratification or approval by signatory States. Instruments of ratification or approval and instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 9

This Agreement shall enter into force upon the deposit of the second instrument of ratification, approval, or accession. It shall enter into force as to a State ratifying, approving, or acceding thereafter upon deposit of its instrument of ratification, approval, or accession.

Article 10

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States referred to in Article 7 of signatures, deposits of instruments of ratification, approval, or accession, the date of entry into force of this Agreement, proposals for amendment, notifications of acceptances of amendments, and notices of withdrawal.

Article 11

The original of this Agreement, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall send certified copies thereof to all States referred to in Article 7.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Agreement.

Done at \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_  
day of \_\_\_\_\_, 196\_\_.

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



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ENGLISH ONLY

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CORRIGENDUM

Page 1, fourth line:

Replace the word "Principals" by "Principles".