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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Fifty-seventh session

Vienna, 3-14 February 2020

Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

**Proposal submitted by the Delegation of the People's
Republic of China on Terms of References, Methods of
Work and Workplan of the Newly Established Working
Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space
Activities (LTSWG 2.0)**

The present conference room paper was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from the delegation of China. The information was reproduced in the form it was received.

The proposal was received by the Secretariat on 23 January 2020 and was circulated via official information circular to all Permanent Missions of States members of the Committee on 23 January 2020.

* A/AAC.105/C.1/L.383



Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
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Proposal submitted by the Delegation of the People's Republic of China on Terms of References, Methods of Work and Workplan of the Newly Established Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTSWG 2.0)

1. The General Assembly in its resolution 73/6, entitled "*Fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: space as a driver of sustainable development*", emphasized the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and convinced of the need to strengthen international cooperation, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to achieve those goals and contribute to realizing a shared vision for the future in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interest of all humankind.
2. To fulfill the above-mentioned mission, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its 62nd session in 2019, adopted the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as contained in A/AC.105/C.1/L.366, which is the outcome of eight years substantial work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.
3. Based on such success and to further the work on this matter, the Committee decided to establish, under a five-year workplan, a working group of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. This decision was lately endorsed by the General Assembly at its 74th session (A/RES/74/82).
4. In accordance with the decision of the Committee, the working group would agree on its own terms of reference, methods of work and dedicated workplan at the 57th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2020.
5. China hereby submits a proposal on terms of references, methods of work and workplan, for consideration by member States and observers of the Subcommittee in its upcoming session on the establishment of the working group.

Terms of reference

6. The newly established Working Group (LTSWG 2.0) will base its work on the previous efforts and progress made by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee from 2010 to 2018.
7. The Working Group will examine the long-term sustainability of outer space activities in the wider context of sustainable development, including the contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking into account the concerns and interests of all countries, in particular those of developing countries, and consistent with the peaceful uses of outer space.

8. The Working Group will take into consideration current practices, operating procedures, technical standards and policies associated with the safe conduct of space activities throughout all the phases of the mission life cycle.

9. The Working Group will take as its legal framework the existing United Nations treaties and principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, in particular article VI of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty).

10. The Working Group will focus as priorities on the following items:

(a) Identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, with reference to the draft guidelines contained in *Draft guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities* (A/AC.105/C.1/L.367) and the information reflected in *Meeting hosted by Switzerland on possible further work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities: Background and Chair's Summary* (A/AC.105/2019/CRP.16). The possible new guidelines could include:

- (i) Conducting space activities [solely] for peaceful purposes;
- (ii) Identification, mitigation and management of the risk to terrestrial infrastructure that supports the operation of orbital systems;
- (iii) Procedures for active removal of space objects;
- (iv) Procedures for outer space activities involving non-registered objects;
- (v) Safe conduct of proximity space operations;
- (vi) Precaution measures when using of natural space environment modification techniques for peaceful purposes;
- (vii) Exclusion of use of information and communications technology that could compromise the safety and security of space objects and related equipment;
- (viii) Management of challenges posed by large constellations; and
- (ix) Other new challenges of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

Any envisaged new guidelines should:

(i) maintain or improve the safety of spaceflight operations and protect the space environment without imposing unacceptable or unreasonable obligations and costs, and taking into account the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) be consistent with existing international legal frameworks for outer space activities and should be voluntary and not be legally binding; and

(iii) be consistent with the relevant activities and recommendations of other working groups of the Committee and its Subcommittees, the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee and other relevant international organizations.

(b) Sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation of the adopted guidelines, reviewing of and making recommendations to the previously adopted guidelines, as appropriate;

(c) Raising awareness and building capacity, in particular among emerging space-faring and developing countries, including initiatives on international cooperation mechanism for capacity building, as appropriate.

11. As outputs, the Working Group will submit a report on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and a draft of guidelines which includes new guidelines, and revised guidelines if any, and recommendations on potential international cooperation mechanism for capacity building as appropriate, to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at the conclusion of its work.

Methods of work

12. The Working Group will be chaired by a Bureau, which would be elected at the 57th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2020. The Working Group reports to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

13. The meetings of the Working Group are guided by the rules of procedure, methods of work and established practices related to the Committee. The Working Group takes decisions by consensus.

14. The Working Group will meet with interpretation services in all six official languages of the United Nations during the sessions of the Committee as well as during the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The Working Group may hold informal consultations on the margins of the sessions. The Working Group may also decide to meet intersessionally, as necessary, to advance its work.

15. The Working Group is intergovernmental by nature. The Working Group will incorporate input from member States of the Committee, organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee, as well as non-governmental organizations, industry and the private sector in accordance with the rules of procedure, methods of work and established practices related to the Committee.¹

16. The Working Group may decide to establish expert groups to focus on specific issues, as necessary, to advance the work of the Working Group as a whole.

Workplan

17. The proposed workplan would be as follows:

2020

Develop terms of reference, methods of work and workplan. Identify a point of contact for each member state represented in the Working Group. Invite member states and international inter-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee to submit proposals on possible new guidelines. Invite member states and international inter-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee to provide information related to experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation of the adopted guidelines. Enhance capacity building through experts reports and seminars.

2021

¹ Non-governmental organizations, industry and the private sector could provide contributions and information through the ways as follows: i. be incorporated by member states of the Committee; ii. present reports to the Committee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Develop a draft list of new guidelines and hold a preliminary discussion thereof. Exchange views on the information provided by the member States and international inter-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee on the experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation of the adopted guidelines. Build capacity and invite proposals on international cooperation mechanism of capacity building.

2022

Consider the draft list of new guidelines and start on drafting new guidelines. Continue with sharing experiences on implementation of the adopted guidelines, and consider possible revision to any of the adopted guidelines. Build capacity and hold consultations over proposals on the international cooperation mechanism of capacity building.

2023

Develop a draft report, a draft of new guidelines and revised guidelines if any, and recommendations on international cooperation mechanism for capacity building. Circulate the above-mentioned drafts to the members of the Working Group for comment.

2024

Consider and finalize the draft report, the draft guidelines, and recommendations on the international cooperation mechanism of capacity building. Submit the drafts to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its 61st session. Consider the draft report and the draft guidelines and recommendations by the Committee, and determine whether the workplan should be extended to cover potential future work. If the workplan is not extended, discontinue the Working Group.