



# General Assembly

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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space  
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
Fifty-seventh session  
Vienna, 3–14 February 2020**

## Draft report

### X. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

1. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/82](#), the Subcommittee considered agenda item 13, entitled “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities”.
2. The representatives of Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States made statements under agenda item 13. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.
3. The Subcommittee heard the following scientific and technical presentations:
  - (a) “ISU team project ‘Sustainable Moon’”, by the observer for ISU;
  - (b) “Advancing planet Earth’s resource resiliency through synthetic aperture radar (SAR) analytics”, by the representative of Israel;
  - (c) “The impact of mega-constellations of communications satellites on astronomy”, by the observer for IAU;
  - (d) “Managing the plume effect to protect lunar missions of the past, present and future”, by the observer for For All Moonkind;
  - (e) “IAASS position on space debris management”, by the observer for IAASS;
  - (f) “United Arab Emirates capacity-building and international collaborations via space projects”, by the representative of the United Arab Emirates.
4. The Subcommittee had before it the following:
  - (a) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by Switzerland: concerning the newly established working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.4);
  - (b) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by Canada, Japan and the United States of America for the establishment of a working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.5);



(c) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by the United Arab Emirates” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.6);

(d) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by Japan: concerning the Bureau of the new working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.7);

(e) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by India” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.8);

(f) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal submitted by the Delegation of the People’s Republic of China on the Terms of Reference, Methods of Work and Workplan of the Newly Established Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTSWG 2.0)” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.9);

(g) Conference room paper entitled “Proposal by the United Arab Emirates” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.10);

(h) Conference room paper submitted by the United Arab Emirates entitled “Proposal on a Voluntary Implementation Reporting Survey for the Guidelines related to Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.12);

(i) Conference room paper entitled “Voluntary Implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and Proposed Reporting Approach by the United Kingdom” (A/AC.105/C.1/2020/CRP.15).

5. The Subcommittee welcomed the adoption by the Committee at its sixty-second session of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/74/20, annex II), as well as the decision taken by the Committee at the same session to establish, under a five-year workplan, a working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

6. The Subcommittee recalled that the Committee had agreed that the bureau of the working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities would be elected at the beginning of the fifty-seventh session of the Subcommittee on the basis of nominations to be submitted to and circulated by the Secretariat during the intersessional period, and that the Committee had also agreed that the bureau would lead the work of the working group at the fifty-seventh session with a view towards the development, at the fifty-seventh session, of the working group’s: (a) terms of reference; (b) methods of work, including ways of incorporating input from non-governmental organizations, industry and the private sector through States members of the Committee; and (c) workplan.

7. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the nominations for the bureau that had been submitted intersessionally by the delegations of India, Japan, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates.

8. The Subcommittee also noted that extensive informal consultations with interested delegations on the election of the bureau had been held on the margins of the fifty-seventh session. In that connection, the Subcommittee noted with appreciation the efforts of the delegation of South Africa in chairing the informal consultations.

9. The Subcommittee noted that it had not been able to elect the bureau of the working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities at the present session, that the working group had not held meetings at the session and that the terms of reference, methods of work and workplan had not been developed. The Subcommittee agreed, however, that the bureau of the working group should have a single Chair and a single Vice-Chair.

10. The view was expressed that the consensus reached on the set of technical, best-practice Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities demonstrated the ability of all States members of the Committee to work together to

preserve space for the benefit of humankind, and that the work leading to that achievement had been an excellent and necessary exercise in space diplomacy that had contributed to building transparency and confidence among States members of the Committee.

11. The view was expressed that the 21 adopted Guidelines represented best practices for the safe and responsible use of space and that their adoption marked an important milestone in ensuring that all nations can continue to benefit from the use of space over the long term.

12. The view was expressed that the preamble and 21 Guidelines adopted by the Committee in 2019 were important, but constituted only a first step in ensuring safe and sustainable conditions for the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and that the exchange of national experiences in implementing the Guidelines would be useful, including in identifying areas that required further work and that could be addressed by updating the relevant guidelines. The delegation expressing this view was also of the view that, despite their adoption, the preamble and the 21 Guidelines did not address all relevant risks to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

13. Some delegations expressed the view that there was a need to continue analytical work and to develop new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and that a good basis for such work already existed in the texts on which the previous Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was not able to reach consensus.

14. Some delegations expressed the view that, following years of hard work undertaken in developing the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, States should now focus their efforts on the implementation of the Guidelines.

15. Some delegations expressed the view that the Committee should serve as the principal forum for continued institutional dialogue on issues related to the implementation and review of the 21 adopted Guidelines.

16. Some delegations expressed the view that it was important that the work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities was coordinated and managed so as to ensure the incorporation of views and technical expertise from industry and the private sector.

17. The view was expressed that, owing in particular to their non-binding nature, the 21 adopted Guidelines, and their voluntary implementation at the national level, needed to be considered by States on a coordinated basis so as to avoid fragmentation in the governance of outer space activities.

18. The Subcommittee noted a number of measures that had been or were being undertaken to implement the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Those measures included, inter alia, the review and updating of relevant domestic legislation, the registration of space objects, pre-launch notifications, the development of standards for on-orbit servicing and rendezvous and proximity operations, the implementation of national space policy directives, the announcement of payload permitting principles, private sector efforts to develop and maintain a set of best practices for spaceflight safety, and the development and utilization of “green propellants” to support sustainable exploration.

19. The Subcommittee also noted various initiatives linked with the implementation of the Guidelines, such as the establishment of the Network for Space Object Tracking and Analysis (NETRA), a system for space object tracking and analysis to enhance space debris observation capacity; a new initiative of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum aimed at enhancing the understanding of space law and increasing the capacity to draft and revise national space legislation and national space policy; the launch of the Office for Outer Space Affairs project entitled “Space law for new space actors: fostering responsible national space activities” and the UNISpace Nanosatellite

Assembly and Training capacity-building programme of the Indian Space Research Organization (UNNATI).

20. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the lunchtime side event held on the margins of the fifty-seventh session on the theme “Opportunities and challenges for international cooperation in the implementation of the long-term sustainability (LTS) Guidelines”, which had been organized by SWF. The panel discussion held during the side event had addressed varied experiences in the authorization, supervision and conduct of space activities.

21. The view was expressed that there was a need to explore tools and instruments that take into account the particular needs of developing countries when implementing the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, as well as a need to build capacity in that regard. The delegation expressing this view was also of the view that related long-term sustainability processes should take into account the needs of small delegations and incorporate the points of view of States that were just beginning to undertake space activities.

22. The view was expressed that the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities should not become an instrument for countries that have traditionally developed and used space technology to impose restrictions on other States that aspire to develop and use space technology.

23. The view was expressed that the Guidelines should focus on creating an operationally stable and safe environment that is maintained for peaceful purposes and open to international cooperation by current and future generations, in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, without discrimination of any kind and with due regard for the principle of equity.

24. The view was expressed that there was a need to address the negative environmental impacts space activities can have, that States needed to work together to keep outer space free from debris and that an artificial divide between the Earth environment and the outer space environment should not be created, as both needed to be protected.

25. The view was expressed that, in order for future generations to benefit from space activities, the outer space environment needed to be maintained for peaceful purposes, and that the placement of weapons of any kind in outer space should not be permitted.

26. The view was expressed that there was an urgent need to prevent outer space from emerging as a new arena for conflict and an arms race, threatening regional and international peace and security, as well as the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The delegation expressing this view also encouraged responsible spacefaring nations to commit themselves to not being the first to place weapons in outer space.

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