

25 August 2021

English only

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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space**  
Sixtieth session  
Vienna, 25 August–3 September 2021

**Proposal on the mandate, terms of reference, and workplan  
and methods of work for the working group established  
under the Legal Subcommittee agenda item entitled  
“General exchange of views on potential legal models for  
activities in the exploration, exploitation, and utilization of  
space resources”**

**Conference Room Paper submitted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of  
the working group**

**I. Introduction and background**

1. At its sixtieth session the Legal Subcommittee requested the Chair and Vice-Chair of the working group to continue consultations, in the intersessional period, on the mandate, terms of reference and method of work of the working group with a view that these matters should be considered by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session. (A/AC.105/1243 para. 256).
2. The results of consultations undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair during the intersessional period are set out in section II of the present Conference Room Paper.

**II. Proposed draft mandate, terms of reference and methods  
of work of the working group under a five-year workplan**

**A. Mandate**

3. The working group shall:
  - (a) Collect relevant information concerning activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, including with respect to scientific and technological developments and current practices, taking into account their innovative and evolving nature;
  - (b) Develop a set of initial recommended principles and, if appropriate, practices for such activities taking into account the need to ensure that they are carried

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 25 August 2021.



out in accordance with international law and in a safe, sustainable and peaceful manner, for the consideration of and consensus agreement by the Committee, followed by possible adoption by the United Nations General Assembly as a dedicated resolution or other action;

(c) Study the existing legal framework for such activities, in particular the Outer Space Treaty and other applicable United Nations treaties, also taking into account other relevant instruments, as appropriate;

(d) Assess the benefits of further development of the framework, including by way of additional international governance instruments;

(e) Identify areas for further work of the Committee and recommend next steps, which may include the development of potential models, rules and/or norms, for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, including with respect to related activities and benefit sharing.

## **B. Terms of reference**

4. The terms of reference are as follows:

(a) The Working Group reports to the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee;

(b) The Working Group and its meetings shall be guided by the rules of procedure, methods of work and established practices of the Committee, including with respect to contributions by permanent observers and non-governmental stakeholders;

(c) The Working Group will be led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair and shall be supported by the Secretariat;

(d) The Working Group shall be open to all States members of the Committee, and participation of developing and emerging space-faring countries shall be encouraged;

(e) The Working Group shall take into consideration submissions from States members of the Committee on the issues related to and arising from its Mandate, also taking into account inputs from permanent observers and non-governmental stakeholders such as academia, civil society, technical experts, institutional and private actors;

(f) The Working Group and its members may avail themselves of previous work on the issue of activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, including but not limited to study reports, academic research and papers submitted through relevant States members and permanent observers of the Committee, or by other means as may be determined by the Working Group, including through a dedicated international conference on space resources convened under the auspices of the United Nations, subject to the availability of budgetary resources.

## **C. Workplan and Methods of Work**

(a) On the basis of the agreed mandate and terms of reference, the Working Group shall, in 2022, agree on its detailed workplan and methods of work. This shall include appropriate means of coordination with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

(b) The foregoing shall not prevent the Working Group from undertaking initial administrative, information collection and stocktaking tasks as provided for in its mandate;

(c) The Working Group shall in its work avail itself of electronic means of communication whenever practicable and/or necessary.