

UNISPACE IV – Non-Paper by the Office for Outer Space Affairs

UNISPACE conferences have served as catalysts for key, high-level decisions or recommendations on key scientific and legal matters related to space. UNISPACE I (1968), II (1982), and III (1999) were key conferences held in Vienna, while UNISPACE+50 was a celebration of 50 years since UNISPACE I.

Why 2027? And why take a decision now?

2027 is a pivotal year for the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as workstreams on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, Space Resources, and Sustainable Lunar Activities converge. Given the growing momentum around space activities, calls to strengthen and implement global space governance, and to respond to the growing demand for space-based applications and solutions, especially for developing countries; a UNISPACE IV conference would be a quarter of a century opportunity for COPUOS to initiate concrete actions around critical space issues and give a final push to progress on space governance to leveraging space to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

It would raise space to the level of Heads of States, governments and ministers, and demonstrate its continued ability to deliver results in civil space matters. Most importantly, it would be initiated by and under the control of COPUOS in Vienna focusing on matters under the mandate of COPUOS and could be endorsed by the Summit of the Future in September.

There are also discussions, within the context of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS, the Committee, and in the context of the Summit of the Future related to Space Traffic Coordination or Management and Active Debris Removal.

2027 would also coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty and would provide a landmark occasion for more Member States to consider signing and ratifying the Outer Space Treaty, and other legal instruments such as the Registration Convention and Liability Convention.

Working methods, costings, and timing

A decision by the 67th Session of COPUOS in June 2024, would provide sufficient time for Member States, supported by the Secretariat, to develop a roadmap for organizing UNISPACE IV in Vienna in 2027. The Secretariat would have time to consider the availability of resources and raise them as required. As was the case with UNISPACE III, Member States could consider drafting a declaration to strengthen COPUOS and provide opportunities for UNOOSA to respond to growing demand of the space sector.

* [A/AC.105/L.337](#).



Background on the previous UNISPACE conferences

UNISPACE I (1968)

UNISPACE I, held from 14 to 27 August 1968, was the first in a series of three global UN conferences on outer space, which focused on raising awareness of the vast potential of space benefits for all humankind.

The Conference reviewed the progress in space science, technology and applications and called for increased international cooperation. The Conference also recommended the creation of the post of Expert on Space Applications within UNOOSA, which in turn led to the creation, in 1971, of the UNOOSA Programme on Space Applications. Throughout the 1970s, the Programme implemented trainings and workshops, using space technology in such diverse areas as telecommunications, environmental monitoring and weather forecasting, remote sensing for disaster mitigation and management, agricultural and forestry development, cartography, geology and other resource development applications.

The report of UNISPACE I Conference, which was attended by 78 Member States, 9 specialized UN agencies and 4 other international organizations, is part of the [Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, document A/7285](#).

UNISPACE II (1982)

UNISPACE II (or UNISPACE 82) was held from 9 to 21 August 1982, attended by 94 Member States and 45 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

UNISPACE II addressed the concerns of how to maintain the outer space for peaceful purposes and prevent an arms race in outer space as essential conditions for peaceful exploration and use of outer space. The Conference focused on strengthening the United Nations' commitment to promoting international cooperation to enable developing countries to benefit from the peaceful uses of space technology.

UNISPACE II led to strengthening of the UNOOSA Programme on Space Applications, which increased opportunities for developing countries to participate in educational and training activities in space science and technology and to develop their indigenous capabilities in the use of space technology applications. UNISPACE II also led to the establishment of regional centers for space science and technology education, which are affiliated to the UN and focus on building human and institutional capacities for exploiting the immense potential of space technology for socioeconomic development.

[UNISPACE II Report, Vienna, 9–21 August 1982 \(A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2\)](#)

UNISPACE III (1999)

Rapid progress in space exploration and technology led to UNISPACE III conference, held from 19 to 30 July 1999. UNISPACE III created a blueprint for the peaceful uses of outer space in the 21st century, and outlined a wide variety of actions to:

- Protect the global environment and manage natural resources;
- Increase the use of space applications for human security, development and welfare;
- Protect the space environment;
- Increase developing countries' access to space science and its benefits.

UNISPACE III concluded with the [Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development \(Vienna Declaration\)](#), which contained 33 recommendations as elements of a strategy to address new challenges in outer space activities. [UNISPACE III Report, Vienna 19–30 July 1999 \(A/CONF.184/6\)](#)

UNISPACE III+5

Five years after the last major international conference on outer space, UNISPACE III, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) reviewed the implementation of the 33 recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/59/174).

See the implementation of [UNISPACE III recommendations in UNISPACE III+5 report, A/59/174](#).

UNISPACE+50 (2018)

In June 2018 the international community gathered in Vienna to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space with a dedicated event UNISPACE+50. It provided a great opportunity for the international community to convene and consider the future course of global space cooperation for the benefit of humankind.

UNISPACE+50 consisted of two main parts:

- A [UNISPACE+50 Symposium](#), aimed at the broader space community, on 18 and 19 June; and
- A special [UNISPACE+50 High-level Segment](#) of the 61st session of the [Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space \(COPUOS\)](#) on 20 and 21 June.

From 22 to 29 June, COPUOS reverted to its regular session. UNISPACE+50 led to the negotiation of [the Space2030 Agenda: Space as a Driver of Sustainable Development](#).

Background – Director’s Statement at the 67th Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space:

- *Much has impressed me in my short time here so far, but nothing has impressed me more than the impact of UN-SPIDER on building resilience across over 55 nations so far and the International Committee on GNSS which regardless of the prevailing geopolitics, has continued to advance on discussions of interoperability of GNSS systems. Both initiatives were born of 2 surviving Action Teams from a total of 17 which were agreed on at UNISPACE III. Given the multiple imperatives that require action today, perhaps it is the moment to consider convening a UNISPACE IV space summit in 2027 which would give respected delegates ample time to prepare across two COPUOS cycles and identify areas where Member States’ can collectively and through this forum, advance on civil space priorities.*
