

To: United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

From: The United States of America

Subject: **Contributions to the Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC)**

Date: November 8, 2024

- In regard to the bureau, the United States would support two co-chairs, to ensure an inclusive and representative approach to the work of the Action Team.
- Achieving a peaceful, sustainable ecosystem on and around the Moon will require international cooperation. New lunar space operations and capabilities should invite expanded international engagement. For example, the ATLAC could provide recommendations that help guide the peaceful exploration and use of outer space by all nations. The recommendations should reflect a shared commitment to safe, responsible, and transparent behavior in space, to preserve and protect the outer space environment, and ensure a sustainable future in space for all.
- As we move towards longer-term, more complicated operations on the Moon and beyond, the United States recognizes that these operations pose new legal and policy challenges. As we implement our obligations under the Outer Space Treaty and other international obligations, as we live and work together in space, transparency among moon-faring entities is critical. One recommendation that the ATLAC could provide is to encourage all UN members to be “committed to transparency in the broad dissemination of information regarding their national space policies and space exploration plans.” In this regard, the United States underscores the importance of discussing and identifying potential practical tools for sharing information about lunar activities in a transparent way consistent with our international obligations and commitments.
- Sharing information consistent with our obligations under Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty can help States address many of these challenges, including, for example, issues related to coordination of activities. To this end, the ATLAC could also recommend that UN members provide certain lunar mission data parameters to the United Nations, consistent with our obligations under Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty. The United States followed this coordinated approach and submitted information to UNOOSA for scientific payloads that were carried on commercial spacecraft in 2024, under the NASA Commercial Lunar Payload Services project.
- ATLAC should call upon all countries that are active in the space sector in any way, including through their private sectors, to become a Party to and fully implement the four core treaties governing the use of outer space – the Outer Space Treaty, the

Agreement on the Rescue and Return of Astronauts, the Liability Convention, and the Registration Convention.

- We encourage the ATLAC to ensure that the views and activities of private sector actors are adequately considered and reflected as ATLAC advances its work and we encourage the leadership of UNOOSA to convene private sector actors in parallel with a view to collecting and synthesizing their views to inform the work of ATLAC.
- As multiple spacefaring nations once again explore the lunar environment, ensuring the broadest benefits to all will depend on the open sharing of scientific data gathered from this exploration. Toward this end, the United States encourages ATLAC to consider endorsing an international science year dedicated to lunar science and exploration. An international lunar year timed with a planned uptick in lunar activities might raise the profile of lunar science and exploration, help coordinate data collected parallel missions, and ensure their benefits of lunar exploration for all.
- Whether or not to recommend the establishment of an international mechanism to enhance lunar activities consultation should be duly considered and discussed by the ATLAC. If an international mechanism is established, there are many different possible mechanisms to consider.