



Ministry of Economic Affairs
and Employment of Finland

Finland's Statement in the 61st session of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 28 March – 8 April 2022

Agenda Item 15 - General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources

Thank you Madame Chair, distinguished Delegates, good morning,

Finland is of the opinion that exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources are best to be coordinated at international, multilateral level for the peaceful and sustainable exploration and use of outer space, that is carried out in accordance with international law and in the benefit and interests of all States.

Finland recognizes the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including its Subcommittees, as the main forum for an international dialogue on space policy and space law, and considers as a positive sign that the space resource activities have been in the past years deliberated in the Legal Subcommittee as a single item for discussion.

Madame Chair,

Last year, the legal subcommittee was able to how that international dialogue among the States Members of this Committee works and produces results. Finland welcomes with great appreciation the timely creation of a dedicated working group on space resources under the Agenda Item of Exploration, Exploitation and Utilization of Space Resources in the Legal Subcommittee in ensuring meaningful and effective exchange among the member States of the Committee.

Finland intends to participate actively in these discussions to further common understanding of the principles set out in the UN space treaties and other relevant international instruments developed in the UN, in particular taking into consideration the technological development, the rise of new space actors and novel uses of outer space. Finland believes that is of paramount importance that space activities are carried out at all times with respect to rule of law. All norms should seek to ensure that space resource activities are conducted in a sustainable, economically viable and rational manner, with due regard to the rights of others.

Madame Chair,

It was agreed that delegations would in the context of the Working Group bring forward their views on the legal framework for space resources activities, and foster a common understanding of the relevant principles. These set of initial principles to be developed, and the connected practical measures to be discussed, would ensure that space resource activities are carried out in a safe, sustainable and peaceful manner, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and in accordance with international law.

To achieve this, exchange of views, information sharing on the actual projects and needs at an international scale is necessary to further the necessary international framework for space resources related activities in support of long-term exploration missions.

Finland has initiated together with the German delegation a working paper, which has to date been joined by the delegations of Belgium, Luxembourg and Portugal. The working paper aims to facilitate consensus for a decision on the results-oriented Work Plan of the Working Group as well to make some first proposals for elements to be discussed in a dedicated Space Resources Conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

The States Members submitting this proposal consider it of utmost importance to collaborate on a multilateral level towards an international framework recognizing both collective interests and individual rights in the exploration, utilization and exploitation of space resources. We are confident that the Work Plan by the Chair and the Vice-Chair submitted for the intersessional meeting on 22 March 2022 provides an excellent basis for the Working Group to fulfil its mandate in an efficient and timely manner and therefore are wishing to express their endorsement.

With regards to its specific details, the State members submitting the proposal generally welcome the idea of a questionnaire as a tool to collect relevant information in a structured manner and are willing to discuss and work further with other delegations in this regard. In addition, the states making the proposal remain open to a potential extension of the Work Plan for an additional year.

Lastly, Madame Chair,

One of the key activities of the working group is to hold a dedicated International Conference on Space Resources under the auspices of the United Nations, which aims at providing a platform for multilateral dialogue in both economic, technical and scientific perspectives and, above all, to make the interests of the various actors, including among different forms of industrial and/or scientific use known, in an open and inclusive manner, involving all relevant stakeholders. This conference could provide for means to collect information to further common understanding of the framework conditions for space resource activities.

The working paper proposes some topics which are considered as pressing and thus, are recommended to be addressed, such as: possible designs of an international lunar governance regime or space resources regime; environmental aspects, sustainability of lunar resources activities and designation of protected areas, safety of operations, transparency measures and exchange of mission related information; and requirements for the authorization of space resources activities.

To have a comprehensive view of the issues covered, we invite you to review the paper, which can be found at the dedicated webpage of the working group, under the tap 'Legal Subcommittee 2022'.

We are looking forward to a fruitful exchange and wish to actively work towards finding consensus during this session furthering the work of the working group on space resources. We wish that this contribution could on its part facilitate lively and open discussion during the working group meetings.

Thank you Madame Chair and distinguished Delegates.