Challenges and Opportunities
For Integrating Indigenous Knowledge
into Space Legal Framework

Under
Agenda Item 16: “Proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee”

Milind Pimprikar
Chairman, CANEUS

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What is the Proposed New Item?

CANEUS welcomes this opportunity to propose a new and important item aimed to:

Integrate Indigenous Knowledge into Space Legal Framework”
Why is this **New Item** needed?

01. There is a **lack of genuine understanding, acceptance, and involvement** of stakeholders in decision-making on how traditional Indigenous knowledges are understood or approached into Space Legal Framework.

02. The Committee has yet to address this important issue and the legalities of how **near-Earth space impacts Indigenous communities** and how Indigenous knowledge is **crucial for space-based governance**.
What is the Current Status?

Exploration and use of Outer Space by humankind is leaving out Indigenous People and their knowledge who need to be involved as stakeholders in space governance.

Nonetheless, limited efforts at National and regional levels are encouraging collaborations between Indigenous people and NASA, ESA, CSA, and others.
What are the Challenges?

- Section 3 of Article III of the Outer Space Treaty (OST) and fragmented efforts on space-based governance at localized national level.
- Lack of consideration for inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, and involvement of Indigenous stakeholders.
- Lack of involvement of Indigenous stakeholders in issues such as, satellite mega-constellations, astronomy, and debate over the Artemis Accords overlapping agreements covering UNDRIP by several Member States.
What are the Opportunities?

A binding international agreement

The proposed New Item offers the Committee an opportunity to analyze the potential options to explore:

Non-binding guidelines

Unifying the basic principles embedded in existing UN legal frameworks, e.g.:

- Article 31 of UNDRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples),
- Article 8(j) of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity).
What are the Related Ongoing Efforts?

01. **Series of global initiatives to help integrate Indigenous knowledge with space science and technologies by CANEUS FILAC and UNOOSA**

02. **Numerous presentations to COUPOS by CANEUS since 2019 on the importance of integrating Indigenous Knowledge with space applications**

03. **Technical presentation at the STSC Session on February 9, 2022, suggesting creation of an International Center under the auspices of UN COPUOS to compliment the “Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky” proposed by the International Astronomical Union.**

04. **Launch of a unique and historic “Global Research and Knowledge Repository Initiative”, known as “Indigenous Knowledge Research Infrastructure” (IKRI), aimed to integrate Indigenous Knowledge to achieve the SDG’s, by CANEUS, FILAC and UNOOSA.**
One of the key advantages of integrating Indigenous knowledge into Space legal framework, is that it would provide a degree of protection and harmonization.
What Actions are Needed?

Leveraging diverse efforts worldwide through a structured approach to assess and integrate Indigenous Knowledge into existing space legal framework.
What Actions are Needed?

- Potential Recommendations for Section 3, Article III of OST
- Define near and long-term integration options

Assessment: Addressing the Challenges and Opportunities

COPUOS to Initiate a research paper for the proposed New Agenda Item

Invite contribution from stakeholders representing Indigenous and Space communities
What is the Proposed New Item?

CANEUS welcomes this opportunity to propose a new and important item aimed to:

- Integrate Indigenous Knowledge into Space Legal Framework

That will protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples within the UN system.