



Sixty-second session of the Legal Subcommittee

20-31 March 2023

Agenda Item: 10 – General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources

Thank you, Chair, distinguished delegates.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations space treaties provide the framework for ensuring the peaceful and safe use of outer space, including on the Moon and other celestial bodies.

Australia is a founding Member of the Committee, and State Party to the five UN space treaties, including the *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies* (the Outer Space Treaty).

Australia's international obligations and commitments

Chair,

In recognition of the significant role that the Moon will play in the exploration of outer space, the *Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies* (the Moon Agreement) sets out specific principles relevant to exploration of the Moon, and envisages the potential establishment of a regime to govern exploitation of the Moon's natural resources. Australia acceded to the Moon Agreement in 1986.

In 2020, Australia became a founding signatory to the Artemis Accords, which establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration and aim to increase the safety of operations, reduce uncertainty, and promote the sustainable and beneficial use of space.

Australia considers that the Artemis Accords are consistent with Australia's international obligations. The Signatories intend to use their experience under the Accords to contribute to multilateral efforts to further develop international practices and rules applicable to the extraction and utilization of space resources, including through ongoing efforts at COPUOS.

Australia considers that the Moon Agreement and the Artemis Accords provide frameworks that will *guide* and *enable* Australia's planned future activities on the Moon.

Relevant considerations for developing a set of initial recommended principles for the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources

Chair,

Australia has co-sponsored a Conference Room Paper (CRP) entitled “*Relevant considerations for developing a set of initial recommended principles for the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources*” with Austria and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

This paper seeks to provide relevant considerations for developing a set of initial recommended principles for the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources. It identifies key themes addressed in the Outer Space Treaty, the Moon Agreement, the Hague Building Blocks and the Artemis Accords, with a view to identifying similarities between these instruments.

We look forward to engaging on the views expressed within the CRP during meetings of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities (the Working Group).

Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities

Chair,

Australia extends its full support to the Chair, Mr Andrzej Misztal, and Vice-Chair, Professor Steven Freeland, in their leadership of the Working Group.

In December 2022, Australia provided a submission to the Working Group, following an invitation from the Chair and Vice-Chair, regarding the mandate and purpose of the Working Group.

Australia's submission outlines its views on the existing legal framework for space resource activities, including relevant factors for the development of a set of initial recommended principles for such activities.

Conclusion

Chair,

We thank the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group for their efforts to facilitate further consideration of this important issue. We look forward to working with Member States on the development of a set of initial recommended principles for the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources.

Thank you.