

**AGENDA ITEM 10**  
**POTENTIAL LEGAL MODELS FOR ACTIVITIES IN EXPLORATION, EXPLOITATION**  
**AND UTILIZATION OF SPACE RESOURCES**

**STATEMENT BY EMILY PIERCE, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE**  
**TO THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

**March 21, 2023**

Thank you, Chair

. The United States welcomes that the Working Group under this agenda item will be starting its substantive work in earnest this session. We appreciated the invitation of the Chair and Vice Chair to UNCOPUOS members and observers to make written submissions in response to several suggested topics, and I am happy to report that the United States made its initial submission yesterday. We look forward to discussing the many submissions that were made in the Working Group.

As our written submission discusses in more detail, the long-standing view of the United States is that the utilization of space-based resources – including commercial utilization – can be done consistently with the four core United Nations space treaties. The Outer Space Treaty shapes the manner in which

space resource utilization activities may be carried out, but it does not broadly preclude such activities.

At this stage, the United States sees neither a need nor a practical basis to create a comprehensive international regime for space resource utilization activities. The United States has previously emphasized in its statements under this agenda item that it is important for Legal Subcommittee members to remember that humanity is in the earliest days of space resource exploration, exploitation, and utilization as we discuss legal questions surrounding space resources. The United States acknowledges that the utilization of space-based resources – either on the Moon, asteroids, or elsewhere – is critical to the long-term viability of space activities. Truly substantial increases in human and robotic presence in the solar system will require utilizing resources already located outside of Earth's gravity well. Dr. Greg Chavers of NASA delivered a technical presentation under this agenda item yesterday evening to provide more information about planned space resource exploration activities and the anticipated benefits to humanity of such activities. We encourage those who were unable to join to access his presentation on the UNOOSA website.

As Dr. Chavers' presentation showed, we are in the very early days, and initial technology demonstration missions will be required long before widespread space resource utilization activities occur. The four core space treaties provide a basic legal framework within which interested States can ensure their interests are protected for such initial missions.

We do, however, see an urgent need to ensure that all nations engaged in space resource activities share a common set of fundamental beliefs: in the rule of law, in transparency, and in peaceful purposes, among others. The Artemis Accords underscores these and other critical principles, and forms a starting point for Accords Signatories with respect to future work on space resources.

There is more work to be done, and we recognize that there is strong international interest in discussing these issues in greater detail in the Working Group. To quote from Section 10(3) of the Artemis Accords, "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 the COPUOS." In this regard, we look forward to participating in the Working

Group on space resources and working towards a pragmatic outcome that reflects the early stage of these efforts.

Thank you, Chair.