

National Space Society Statement to UN COPUOS LSC 2023,  
General Exchange of Views

Distinguished members of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS,

On behalf of the International Committee of the National Space Society (NSS), I am honored to address this esteemed body. NSS is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting space exploration, development, and settlement for the benefit of all humanity. As a long-time space researcher, entrepreneur, and advocate, I am thrilled to share our views on the legal challenges that arise from these endeavors.

The exploration and development of space hold immense benefits for humanity, from advancing science and technology to improving the human condition. As we venture further into space and start creating a vibrant space economy, the need for a robust legal framework becomes even more critical.

Orbital debris is one of the primary challenges facing the international community. The dramatic increase in the number of satellites and other space objects orbiting Earth in recent years has led to overcrowding in Earth's orbits, posing significant risks to the safe and secure functioning of orbiting spacecraft. NSS has been at the forefront of bringing attention to this issue, and we have been actively supporting and motivating various groups to develop innovative solutions to this persistent problem. We are pleased to see that the international community is now ready to take concrete steps to mitigate and remediate this threat. Enhanced Space Situational Awareness (SSA), In-Orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing (ISAM), Space Traffic Management (STM), and Active Debris Removal (ADR) are among the measures being considered to address this issue. Alongside technical solutions, it is crucial to ensure that national legislation is aligned with best practices to prevent the generation of more debris. NSS is committed to working with the international community to foster collaboration and support the development of legislation that meets the needs of the global space community.

The utilization of space resources presents a new challenge for the international community, with various legal frameworks and governance models eliciting mixed reactions. However, recent developments indicate that the acquisition and sale of space resources are rapidly becoming a reality. In September 2022, a private company achieved a significant milestone by receiving an interim payment for acquiring lunar regolith. This successful mission will mark the first-ever commercial sale of space resources, executed under a nation's space resources law. Aspiring and established spacefaring nations have become empowered to fund innovative approaches to exploration, fueling the growth of business models that sustainably advance In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) technology.

At NSS, we recognize the importance of enabling legislation that breaks barriers and defines best practices in new markets. We are committed to advocating for the sustainable development of space resources, as we believe their responsible use can bring immense benefits such as advancing science, technology, and providing economic opportunities for all. NSS supports the development of an international governance framework for ISRU that incentivizes investment,

promotes benefit-sharing, and mitigates harmful impacts and interference. We encourage member states to work together towards this goal, and we are eager to learn more about the progress being made in this area.

We also believe that international cooperation is crucial to ensure that space remains a peaceful and secure environment for all nations. NSS supports COPUOS's efforts to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and encourages all member states to work together towards this goal. The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 serves as the legal foundation for space activities and has been ratified by 113 countries, including all major spacefaring nations. However, with the increasing number of space actors, there is a need for further cooperation and coordination to ensure that space remains a safe and secure environment for all. NSS supports COPUOS's efforts to develop guidelines and best practices for responsible space behavior and the prevention of military conflict in space.

Finally, NSS recognizes the rapidly changing nature of space development and the need for innovative approaches financing space activities. The private sector has already demonstrated its potential to play a significant role. However, there is a need to ensure that private sector activities are aligned with international legal frameworks and best practices. NSS is committed to working with the international community to develop innovative financing models that promote responsible space behavior and advance the sustainable development of space resources.

In conclusion, NSS is dedicated to advancing space exploration, development, and settlement for the benefit of all humanity. We believe that these endeavors can be transformative in advancing science, technology, and the human condition. However, with the increasing number of space actors and the emergence of new challenges, it is crucial to ensure that space activities are conducted in a peaceful and secure environment, guided by international legal frameworks and best practices.

This is Fredrick Jenet, NSS Board Member and founder and executive director of Expanding Frontiers. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me at [fjenet@expandingfrontiers.org](mailto:fjenet@expandingfrontiers.org), or to our CEO, Anita Gale, [anita.gale@nss.org](mailto:anita.gale@nss.org). Thank you for your attention.