



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN VIENNA**

63rd SESSION OF THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF COPUOS

ITEM 9: General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources

STATEMENT BY GREECE

Mr Chairman,

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the last few years, there has been an intense debate on the development of activities related to the exploration, exploitation and utilization of outer space resources. Greece has been actively involved on the matter and strongly believes that any such activities need a solid and unequivocal legal framework. The dynamic emergence of the private sector in outer space activities creates new challenges, so it is expected that private entities will play an active role in the exploration and the exploitation of the resources of celestial bodies in general, as and when this becomes feasible. As developments and activities are speeding up, it is obvious that they are testing the boundaries of currently existing legal frameworks on space governance.

As a consequence, it is necessary to significantly reduce the legal risk arising from the absence of clear ad hoc regulations. It follows that the creation of a specific, solid international legal framework would be a decisive factor in making today's expectations a reality. The international character of the relevant framework, together with its consistency with the applicable international law and, in particular, Article III of the Outer Space Treaty, will certainly ensure a responsible use of space resources, on the one hand, and will effectively serve the commonly accepted objective of the long-term sustainability of space activities, on the other.

Mr Chairman,

It must be recalled that, in the *“For All Humanity –the Future of Outer Space Governance” our Common Agenda /Policy Brief 7*, which was elaborated by the *UN Secretary General* in view of the upcoming 2024 UN Summit of the Future, the *Secretary General recommends* MS, among others, and I quote, *“to Develop an effective framework for sustainable exploration, exploitation and utilization of the Moon and other celestial bodies. This framework could include binding and non-legally binding aspects and should build upon the five United Nations treaties on outer space and other instruments for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Without agreed international principles on activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, these economic incentives carry a potential risk of conflict, environmental degradation and cultural loss.”*

In light of the above, Greece’s position is that the UN COPUOS -and in particular its Legal Subcommittee- is and should continue to be the primary forum for the discussions on an international legal framework for the development of space resource activities(emphasis added).In developing such a legal framework, the importance of international cooperation is more than crucial and, in this connection, we believe that any other existing multilateral initiatives, fora or models of constructive multilateral cooperation on the matter are welcome, and could contribute to our collective aspiration to expand the horizons of human exploration and knowledge, in accordance with the applicable international law and, in particular, Article III of the Outer Space Treaty. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that existing international space law is fully implemented and that effective governance is in place to propel innovation and mitigate risks.

Mr. Chairman,

As said already, Regulations are needed to ensure legal certainty. They should not be too restrictive, to allow economic growth, but at the same time they should ensure that space is available for future generations.

The COPUOS Legal Subcommittee has proven its ability to deliver on its mandate. In this connection, the establishment of the WG “on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities,” *constitutes an important achievement of the Legal Sub Committee and a development well* reflected in operative para. 8 of the UN General Assembly Resolution 78/72 of 2023, titled “International Cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space,” which welcomes the establishment of the WG.

From our side, we commend the progress made so far within the Working Group on the Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, under the effective leadership of its Chair, Ambassador Andrzej Misztal, and its Vice-Chair, Professor Steven Freeland, and express our full support to their work.

We would also like to highlight the importance of the “*Expert meeting collecting preliminary inputs for consideration at the international conference in Vienna in 2024*,” co-hosted by Belgium and Luxembourg in March 2024, as well as the considerable importance of the *International Conference on Space Resources*, held just three days ago, here in Vienna, on the sidelines of the 63rd Session of the Legal Subcommittee. These two events have positively enriched the ongoing debate and, most importantly, gave us all the opportunity to participate in an inclusive and transparent discussion of consensually agreed topics of utmost significance for the development of an international framework on space resource activities, which framework aims at facilitating initiatives by States, through either governmental or non-governmental entities, to utilize space resources in an efficient, lawful, sustainable, rational and equitable manner, in accordance with international law.

The realization of the said two events proves, for once more, that, when there is a will, there is always a way, and we are proud to have been part of them. We are also proud that the initial proposal of Greece and Belgium in 2019 for the establishment of a legal framework for space resource activities through the creation of a WG within the legal Subcommittee has evolved so dynamically with tangible results in terms of dialogue and cooperation.

We would also like, in this regard, to commend Portugal for its contribution to the outer space dialogue through the organization with the assistance of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of two virtual symposiums in view of the upcoming Lisbon International Conference on the Management & Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We were honored to actively participate, in March 2024, in the virtual Symposium on Policy Issues and to discuss with prominent international experts from industry, academia and the Member States on the issue of space resource activities and their governance.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding,

Let me assure you that Greece will continue to support the work of the working group on space resources and will work continuously towards the implementation of a substantial international cooperation on the issue of exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources. We are looking forward to constructively participating in the forthcoming WG's meetings during the following two weeks.

I thank you