

**Empowering Inclusive Legal Dialogue for a Sustainable Space Future**  
**National Space Society**  
**Submitted under Agenda Item 4**

Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues,

The National Space Society (the NSS) is honored to once again participate in the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). As a global, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the peaceful exploration, development, and settlement of space, the NSS is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the legal discussions shaping the future of outer space governance.

Founded at the dawn of the space age, the NSS has grown into the largest citizen-led space advocacy organization in the United States, with chapters and members spanning the globe. Its mission is supported by robust programs in education, policy, media, and professional development, all designed to promote international cooperation and advance the peaceful and sustainable development of space.

In 2024, the NSS expanded its global engagement through educational and policy initiatives. Its *Live in a Healthy Space* design competition attracted more than 9,000 students with 1,641 entries from 11 countries, including Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Canada, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Turkey, and the United States—demonstrating broad international participation.

The NSS also leverages key media platforms to engage public and professional audiences globally. *Ad Astra* magazine—focused on space science, law, and policy—is distributed through more than 1,000 North American bookstores, reaches over 50,000 digital subscribers, and is regularly delivered to U.S. congressional offices. Through a new global distribution agreement, it is now also available to a network of more than 110,000 libraries worldwide. Additional outreach is conducted through partnerships with the *Science and Futurism with Isaac Arthur* YouTube channel and the *This Week in Space* podcast, which together reach millions of viewers and frequently feature discussions on space governance and other topics relevant to COPUOS deliberations.

Policy engagement remains central to the NSS mission. Its *March Storm* citizen advocacy initiative promoted legislation in support of commercial space development, planetary defense, and space traffic management. In late 2024, the *Space Settlement Summit* at Kennedy Space Center brought together over 100 stakeholders to address legal and policy considerations for permanent human habitation in space.

In support of this year's Legal Subcommittee agenda, the NSS respectfully highlights the following contributions:

- **Under Agenda Item 6: Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space**  
 The NSS has submitted a Conference Room Paper titled *Air/Space Delimitation & Suborbital Space Travel*, which proposes a **functionalist approach**—applying air law to suborbital vehicles that never reach orbital velocity. This approach prioritizes legal

clarity, enhances safety protections for passengers, and supports regulatory consistency as commercial suborbital activities expand.

- **Under Agenda Item 9: General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures,**  
The NSS has submitted a CRP titled *Space Debris Mitigation and Remediation: Policy and Legal Challenges*, along with a technical presentation titled *Deorbiting Large Space Objects – Legal Challenges and Considerations*. The CRP emphasizes that effective mitigation and remediation require **clear attribution of responsibility, improved international coordination**, and a proactive legal framework that accounts for both legacy debris and emerging technologies.
- **Under Agenda Item 11: General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management.**  
The NSS has submitted a CRP titled *Space Traffic Management: Legal Challenges and Considerations*, which calls for **harmonized global frameworks** that respect national sovereignty while promoting safety, predictability, and sustainable commercial operations. The paper outlines key legal uncertainties in space traffic management governance and proposes a phased, collaborative approach to address them.

As a Permanent Observer to COPUOS, the NSS deeply values the opportunity to participate in this important forum. We are here to listen, learn, and contribute constructively. In that spirit, we welcome input from Member States on how non-governmental organizations like the NSS can best support your work. In particular, we invite your thoughts on the three to five most pressing legal questions that, if addressed, would most effectively advance your national space initiatives and contribute to global progress in space governance.

We thank the Secretariat for its excellent support and look forward to continued collaboration with all delegates.

Thank you.