



64th session of the Legal Subcommittee

5 – 16 May 2025

Statement by Australia

Agenda Item: 8 – General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the 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 foundation for the peaceful and safe use of outer space, including on the Moon and other celestial bodies. As interest in the exploration of outer space grows, the Committee's consensus-based approach to addressing emerging issues is as important as ever.

Chair,

Australia is a State Party to the five United Nations space treaties, including the Moon Agreement.

Australia is also a founding signatory to the Artemis Accords, which establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration.

Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities

Chair,

Australia is pleased to contribute to the work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, including the development of a set of initial recommended principles.

Australia is actively considering its international obligations and commitments, including in the context of future planned activities.

This includes an activity that is to be conducted as part of the Trailblazer lunar rover program under the Australian Government's Moon to Mars Initiative. The program includes the development, launch and operation of a foundation services rover, carrying technology demonstration instruments that will help study lunar regolith to support humanity's return to the Moon and beyond.

After almost 18-months of design, in December 2024, it was announced that Australian consortium ELO₂ had been chosen to deliver the rover under the Moon to Mars Initiative. ELO₂ is made up of more than 20 organisations – from Australian space start-ups and small businesses to major resources companies, universities, and other research partners.

With the growing interest in lunar exploration, it is important that the Working Group develops principles that provide guidance regarding activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources. In doing so, it is also

important that the Working Group considers the need for such activities to be carried out in accordance with international law, and in a safe, sustainable, rational and peaceful manner.

Australia was pleased to receive the draft set of initial recommended principles on 14 March 2025. We thank Mr Steven Freeland for preparing these for consideration by the Working Group. The recent intersessional meeting of the Working Group provided a timely opportunity to engage in initial, productive discussions, and we look forward to further exchanges during this session.

We note some matters which may be of relevance to space resource activities – for example, information-sharing and consultation – are currently being considered within the Committee. This includes by the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, and the Action Team on Lunar Activities Consultation (ATLAC).

In all our work, it is important that each line of effort complements the others. To this end, Australia supports consultation between the bureaux of the Committee's Working Groups and the ATLAC, as appropriate.

APRSAF-30

Chair,

Australia, through the Australian Space Agency, was pleased to co-host the 30th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum

(APRSAF-30) with the Japan Aerospace and Exploration Agency and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan in Perth from 26-29 November 2024. The theme of the forum, '*Collaborating to build a sustainable and responsible regional space sector*', provided an opportunity to explore several aspects of outer space activities. This included through a Space Policy and Law Working Group session entitled 'Sustainability and lunar activities – opportunities for coordination and governance'.

This session was a valuable opportunity to hear a range of perspectives on lines of effort related to lunar activities. The Agency was pleased to moderate the session in support of enhancing information sharing and mutual learning of the practice of space policy and law, and to foster dialogue on issues which may be of relevance to space resource activities.

Closing

Chair,

Australia is of the view that there is a clear operational and practical need to work together in the peaceful use and exploration of outer space.

In this regard, we look forward to working with Member States on the development of a set of initial recommended principles for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources.

Thank you.