

Statement of the Islamic Republic of Iran

on Agenda Item 8

**General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration,
exploitation, and utilization of space resources.**

Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS

May 2025

Mr. Chair,

In recent decades, technological advancements in the field of space resource exploration and extraction have brought about new perspectives, opportunities, and risks in the outer space domain. These developments necessitate that the exploration, extraction, and utilization of space resources be conducted in a manner that upholds legal, ethical, environmental, and developmental considerations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasizing the values of justice, peace, sustainable development, and global responsibility, believes that the exploitation of space resources must be carried out within the framework of international space law, ensuring fairness, transparency, and multilateral cooperation. Under Articles I and II of the Outer Space Treaty (OST), no state, private entity, or individual may claim sovereign or exclusive ownership over celestial bodies or their resources. Exclusionary approaches, unilateral actions, and the establishment of national legal regimes seeking to regulate space activities through national frameworks, particularly concerning space resource exploration and extraction, pose serious threats to the foundational principles of the OST.

In recent years, some states have adopted national legislation related to the exploitation of space resources, which risks triggering conflicts of interest, legal disputes, and heightened political tensions. This trend marginalizes the current framework of international space law and undermines its effectiveness. In the absence of clear guiding principles and, ultimately, an effective legal framework to regulate space resources, outer space risks rapidly transforming into a domain of unhealthy competition rather than international cooperation, further deepening the divide between advanced spacefaring nations and others."

The challenge of the technological divide among nations is a key issue in the exploitation of space resources. Only a limited number of countries possess the technical and economic capabilities to extract space resources, which can lead to monopolization and the exclusion of developing countries from the outer space economic cycle. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that space resources should not be used solely for the benefit of those with the capacity to explore and utilize them. Rather, they must be preserved and exploited as the common heritage of humankind, in line with the goals of research, development, and the advancement of global equity. International cooperation, the sharing of knowledge and transfer of technology, the establishment of regional educational centers, and support for joint research and international projects are among the means that can help reduce disparities in access to space activities and benefits among states.

The extraction of space resources, if conducted without scientific and environmental considerations, may lead to the destruction of extraterrestrial ecosystems, contamination of celestial bodies, and irreversible changes to the space environment, even affecting Earth's biosphere. The exploitation of space resources must therefore be subject to transparent and comprehensive environmental assessments, taking into account potential impacts on both extraterrestrial and terrestrial ecosystems. Any activity resulting in the destruction of the natural structures of celestial bodies shall entail legal liability for the responsible states and space companies.

Chair,

We express our deepest condolences on the passing of Ambassador Mishtal, the late Chair of the relevant Working Group, and fully support the efforts of the Working Group's Vice-Chair, Professor Freeland, in preparing the draft principles on space resources. We believe that opportunities and challenges concerning the exploration, extraction, and utilization of space resources require the international community to ultimately aim for the adoption of a comprehensive and legally binding international agreement for the governance of space resources. Such an agreement should include transparent mechanisms for reporting, information sharing, and the equitable distribution of benefits arising from space resources.

While recognizing that we have yet to reach a comprehensive and legally binding instrument on space resources, we maintain that, with appropriate modifications, the principles prepared by the Vice-Chair of the Working Group may represent a constructive step toward that goal. In this spirit, we will continue to actively engage in the discussions of this Working Group and the current session of the Legal Subcommittee.

Thank you.