

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine  
at the 64-th session of the LSC COPUOS  
(05-16 May 2025, Vienna)**

**Agenda Item 7: Future role and method of work of the Committee**

**Mr.Chair!**

**Distinguished delegates!**

In the context of the issue of the future role and methods of work of the Committee, the delegation of Ukraine would like to draw attention to the following: International space law, formed mainly in the second half of the twentieth century, aims to establish universal legal principles to ensure the peaceful use of outer space, promote international cooperation and prevent conflicts between states in the field of space activities.

Established in 1959 as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, the Committee has historically played a crucial role in the formation of international space law. However, the current stage of development of space activities - with its commercialization, militarization, participation of non-conventional actors, new technologies, including AI, robotics, autonomous systems and increasing risks for the whole of humanity - makes us think about the existing architecture of global space law and its governance.

Nowadays, numerous new actors have emerged, including private corporations, universities, NGOs and internationally funded consortiums, which are engaged in full-fledged research, technological and even commercial activities in outer space. This new context may cause legal tension between the principle of state responsibility for the activities of all national actors in outer space under Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty and the practical autonomy that these non-state actors are gaining. However, these same processes demonstrate the need for their regulation at the universal level, taking into account the interests of the entire international community.

Recognizing these dynamics, the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee, among other things, initiated the creation of a working group on legal aspects of activities related to space resources, whose mandate includes a comprehensive analysis of the current regulatory framework, systematization of national legislation, collection of information on relevant practices and formulation of recommendations for future legal development. This is the right way to go. Moreover, we believe that we should not only talk about fragmentary regulation, but also about updating international space law as a whole, for example, by supplementing the current treaty framework.

In view of the above, the ethical dimension of space activities is increasingly recognized as an integral part of the legal and political regulation of space exploration. Today, the scientific understanding of space ethics covers philosophical, legal, anthropological, bioethical, environmental, and other approaches to the formation of the principles of exploration and use of outer space, celestial bodies, and space resources. In the legal context, ethical norms have the

potential to be implemented as a source of legal principles, similar to basic human rights or general principles of international law recognized by civilized nations.

To date, existing legal documents only briefly touch upon ethical issues. However, the absence of clear ethical guidelines is particularly noticeable in cases of potential planetary contamination, interference with the natural environments of other celestial bodies, the risks of transferring terrestrial biological forms to extraterrestrial ecosystems, or in relation to human cultural heritage in space. In March 2023, during the 62nd session of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee, a number of states, including Belgium, took the initiative to integrate ethical perspectives into the future legal discourse on space resource extraction. Ukraine certainly welcomes this view, but suggests that it should be extended to all activities related to the exploration and use of outer space, celestial bodies and space resources in their broadest sense. This would mark the beginning of the establishment of ethics within the framework of international law-making. This initiative opens the way to the formalization of ethical principles through a conference process and/or the work of an ad hoc group.

In the long-term perspective, the development of a Universal Declaration on Space Ethics - similar to the UNESCO Declaration on Bioethics - could be the next step in the codification of an ethical framework for the sustainable, equitable and responsible exploration and use of outer space.

The importance of ethics is crucial for Ukraine. Ukraine is a state that is currently defending not only its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also the fundamental values of freedom, dignity and humanity in a fierce, existential war with the Russian aggressor, and remains faithful to the ideals of international law in the face of war.

We believe that the discourse on a new ethical and legal paradigm for space exploration - as a space not for competition for dominance, but as a space of shared responsibility towards living and future generations of humanity - should lead to the formation of new global guidelines that combine legitimacy, technical feasibility and moral responsibility.

The above demonstrates the need for sustainable, inclusive and technically competent mechanisms capable of ensuring joint development of both international space law and ethics. And given the growing complexity of space activities and the emergence of new actors, it is appropriate to consider whether the current institutional architecture is sufficient to ensure consistent and long-term coordination and regulation in this area. We believe that the Committee retains a unique ability to act as a cornerstone of any future mechanism for global coordination in the exploration and use of outer space and international space law.

Thank you for your attention!