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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Legal Subcommittee
Sixtieth session
Vienna, 31 May–11 June 2021

Draft report

VIII. Future role and method of work of the Committee

1. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/92](#), the Subcommittee considered agenda item 9, entitled “Future role and method of work of the Committee”.
2. The representatives of Austria, Canada, China, France, Indonesia, Israel, Mexico, the Russian Federation and the United States made statements under agenda item 9. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were made by representatives of other member States.
3. The Subcommittee had before it a note by the Secretariat on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies ([A/AC.105/C.1/L.384](#)).
4. The Subcommittee recalled that, at its sixty-second session, the Committee had decided to introduce a regular item entitled “Future role and method of work of the Committee” on the agendas of both Subcommittees to allow for discussion of cross-cutting issues ([A/74/20](#), para. 321 (h)).
5. The Subcommittee welcomed document [A/AC.105/C.1/L.384](#) as an important basis for further consideration under the multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.
6. Some delegations expressed the view that the principle of consensus applied by the Committee allowed it to make universally applicable decisions aimed at addressing a broad range of emerging issues in the area of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.
7. Some delegations expressed the view that the mandates of working groups should be reviewed every five years.
8. The view was expressed that the number of working groups should remain manageable in order to ensure participation by all States, especially those with smaller delegations, and in view of the limited resources of the Secretariat.
9. The view was expressed that technical presentations should be held during lunchtime for no more than one hour; that, in the last hour of interpretation time each day, time should be allocated to presentations requiring interpretation; and that the duration of technical presentations should be limited to 10 minutes.



10. The view was expressed that the traditional half-day symposium should be extended to one full day, or be supplemented with an additional symposium, panel discussion or session of presentations on a specific agenda item.
11. Some delegations expressed the view that increased coordination, interaction and synergies between the Subcommittees on cross-cutting issues would increase the efficiency of their work.
12. The view was expressed that cooperation between the Subcommittees could be improved if they reported to each other regularly.
13. The view was expressed that the intergovernmental status of the Committee should be preserved and that any interference by non-governmental entities in the work of the Committee should be avoided.
14. Some delegations expressed the view that reporting by various non-governmental entities, including from industry, the private sector and the scientific and academic communities, to the Committee would enhance its overall work.
15. The view was expressed that attempts to transfer the discussion of important topics on the space agenda to parallel platforms with limited membership would undermine the international authority of the Committee.
16. The view was expressed that the work of United Nations entities with regard to space-related issues should be closely coordinated with the work of the Committee.
17. The view was expressed that the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions that addressed issues under the purview of the Committee, such as the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and space debris, without any involvement of the Committee, might erode the responsibilities of the Committee and distort the division of responsibilities and the coordination and cooperation among different entities within the United Nations system.
18. The view was expressed that the Committee was not the appropriate forum to discuss questions specifically related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space or to the use of outer space for military and other national security purposes.
19. The view was expressed that the principles contained in the Outer Space Treaty, as well as other applicable international obligations, guided the full range of governmental and private sector space activities.
20. The view was expressed that consideration of the legal aspects of the practical implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Committee should be included in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee to ensure the involvement of legal experts of States.
21. The view was expressed that the Committee should focus its work on the development of complex solutions for ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, including in the areas of space debris mitigation and remediation, space traffic management, small satellites, and the prevention and resolution of conflicts arising from outer space activities.
22. Some delegations expressed the view that the hybrid format of the current session, which had included live webcasting of plenary sessions with interpretation into the six official languages of the United Nations, had allowed greater participation of countries in the work of the Subcommittees, and that such a hybrid format could be maintained for the future sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees.
23. The view was expressed that a procedure to follow in cases of force majeure should be established to ensure the continuity of the work of the Committee in crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

XIV. Proposals to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for new items to be considered by the Legal Subcommittee at its sixty-first session

24. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/92, the Subcommittee considered agenda item 15, entitled “Proposals to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for new items to be considered by the Legal Subcommittee at its sixty-first session”, as a regular item on the agenda.

25. The representatives of Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Ukraine and the United States made statements under agenda item 15. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

26. The Subcommittee agreed that the following items be proposed to the Committee for inclusion in the agenda of the Subcommittee at its sixty-first session:

Regular items

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Chair.
3. Statement by the Chair.
4. General exchange of views.
5. Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law.
6. Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space.
7. Matters relating to:
 - (a) The definition and delimitation of outer space;
 - (b) The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union.
8. National legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.
9. Capacity-building in space law.
10. Future role and method of work of the Committee.

Items under workplans

11. General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.
(see paras. [...] to [...] of the present report)

Single issues/items for discussion

12. General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, taking into account the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.
13. General exchange of information on non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space.
14. General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management.
15. General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities.

New items

16. Proposals to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for new items to be considered by the Legal Subcommittee at its sixty-second session.
27. The Subcommittee took note of a proposal by the delegation of Egypt to add a new item to the agenda of the Subcommittee, to be entitled “Space culture, a new era for human civilization” (A/AC.105/C.2/2021/CRP.20/Rev.1).
28. The Subcommittee took note of a proposal by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the issue of equitable access of the developing Member States to the geostationary orbit (A/AC.105/C.2/2021/CRP.21).
29. The Subcommittee took note of a proposal by the delegation of Ukraine to add a new item to the agenda of the Subcommittee, to be entitled “Cybersecurity of space activities” (A/AC.105/C.2/2021/CRP.27).
30. Some delegations expressed the view that the delegation of Egypt should continue to develop its proposal, including the terms of reference and relevant modalities, for further consideration by the Subcommittee.
31. Some delegations expressed the view that the scope of issues contained in the proposals by the delegations of Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Ukraine were either beyond the scope of work of the Subcommittee or fell under the competence of other existing international platforms.
32. Some delegations expressed the view that, in view of the already full agenda of the Subcommittee, no additional items should be added to its agenda, unless a decision was made to reduce the number of existing items.
33. The Subcommittee noted that Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Ukraine intended to retain their respective proposals for further consideration at the sixty-first session of the Subcommittee.
34. The Subcommittee agreed that the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law should again be invited to organize a symposium, to be held during the sixty-first session of the Subcommittee, with due account to be taken of equitable geographical and gender representation among the participants in order to reflect a broad range of opinions, and that the organizers should seek the cooperation of interested academic entities for that purpose.
35. The Subcommittee noted that its sixty-first session had been tentatively scheduled to be held from 28 March to 8 April 2022.
