Request for observer status with the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: application of the Outer Space Institute (OSI)

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its thirty-third session, in 1990, the Committee considered guidelines for granting observer status with the Committee to international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The possible criteria suggested by the Outer Space Affairs Division to the Committee at that time were the following:
   (a) As part of its programme, the organization should be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;
   (b) The aims and purposes of the organization should be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;
   (c) The organization should be a recognized international organization and should have an established headquarters, an executive officer, and a constitution, a copy of which is deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In the case of a non-governmental organization, it should be a non-profit organization.

2. Having considered the matter, the Committee at its thirty-third session, agreed, that in the future non-governmental organizations which request observer status with the Committee should have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and should, as part of their programmes, be concerned with matters falling with the competence of the Committee.

3. At its fifty-third session, in 2010, the Committee agreed that observer status would be granted to non-governmental organizations on a provisional basis, for a period of three years, pending information on the status of their application for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Committee also agreed that the provisional observer status could be extended for an additional year, if
necessary. The Committee further agreed that it would grant permanent observer status to such non-governmental organizations upon confirmation of their consultative status with the Council.

4. While the Committee’s decision did not specifically include the elements referred to in 1 (c) above, it has been the practice of the committee, since its decision in 1990, to have before it the constitution or statutes of the organization or entity requesting observer status.

5. On 5 April 2024, the Office for Outer Space Affairs received an application for observer status with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space from OSI. The following related correspondence received from OSI is attached to this document:

   (a) Letter from OSI conveying the intention to become a permanent observer of the Committee;
   (b) Certificate of Incorporation;
   (c) Outer Space Institute Society Constitution;
   (d) Bylaws of Outer Space Institute Society; and
   (e) Outer Space Institute Fellows.
Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini  
Director  
United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)  
Vienna International Centre  
Wagramerstrasse 5  
A-1220 Vienna  
AUSTRIA

Re: Outer Space Institute - Application for Permanent Observer Status with COPUOS

Dear Ms Holla-Maini,

On behalf of the Outer Space Institute (OSI), we are writing to formally apply for the status of Permanent Observer Organization of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

The Outer Space Institute is a global network of space experts united by their commitment to highly innovative, transdisciplinary research that addresses grand challenges facing the continued use and exploration of outer space. The institute is comprised of an international cadre of Fellows and Junior Fellows including physical scientists, social scientists, lawyers, engineers, industry leaders, and policy makers. The transdisciplinary approach enables the OSI to identify challenges, opportunities, and solutions that have been overlooked by other groups.

The OSI was founded in 2019 and is directed by two co-directors who are both Canada Research Chairs. The Institute currently is comprised of 29 Fellows and 14 Junior Fellows from three continents. The Institute is incorporated in British Columbia, Canada as the non-profit “Outer Space Institute Society”.

Since its founding, the Institute has been active in developing new ideas and recommendations on a number of currently challenging issues relating to outer space safety and sustainability including reducing risks from uncontrolled reentries of rocket bodies and other space objects, kinetic anti-satellite testing, space resource utilization, dark and quiet skies, space debris, and other issues concerning the proliferation of large satellite constellations. These studies and recommendations have resulted in three international open letters that have received many hundreds of signatories, including Nobel Laureates, former foreign ministers and retired astronauts. In addition, the co-directors co-authored Who Owns Outer Space? International Law, Astrophysics, and the Sustainable Development of Space (Cambridge University Press, 2023). The book, published “open access” to be freely available around the world, was recently awarded a Certificate of Merit by the American Society of International Law.

We recognize the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to be the only current forum discussing and providing guidance on multilateral issues dealing with challenges in relation to the peaceful uses of outer space as the global utilization and expansion of this domain accelerates. As a Permanent Observer Organization, we hope to be able to assist the Committee with insights and suggestions based on the research and recommendations undertaken by the Institute through its projects and regular international workshops.
As per the recommendations of the Committee, we attach the statutes of the Outer Space Institute Society (namely, the constitution, bylaws, and certificate of incorporation) along with a list of the Fellows and Junior Fellows.

More information about the Institute is available at its website: https://outerspaceinstitute.ca/.

Furthermore, we will begin engaging with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in order to obtain consultative status there.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this application and would be pleased to provide any additional information that might be required.

Warm regards,

Michael Byers  
Co-Director  
Outer Space Institute

Aaron Boley  
Co-Director  
Outer Space Institute
Societies Act

Certificate of Incorporation

OUTER SPACE INSTITUTE SOCIETY

I Hereby Certify that ~

OUTER SPACE INSTITUTE SOCIETY was incorporated under the Societies Act on August 30, 2022 at 03:45 PM Pacific Time.

Issued under my hand at Victoria, British Columbia

T.K. SPARKS
Outer Space Institute Society Constitution

The purposes of the society are:

To support and advance scientific and technical knowledge related to human use of the space environment of the solar system by encouraging and facilitating related research, information exchange and policy discussion.

To provide public education on matters related to the human use of outer space, through lectures and workshops and through creation and dissemination of related print and electronic media, with an especial focus on young audiences.
Bylaws of OUTER SPACE INSTITUTE SOCIETY (the “Society”)

PART 1 – DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Definitions

1.1 In these Bylaws:

“Act” means the Societies Act of British Columbia as amended from time to time;

“Board” means the directors of the Society;

“Bylaws” means these Bylaws as altered from time to time.

Definitions in Act apply

1.2 The definitions in the Act apply to these Bylaws.

Conflict with Act or regulations

1.3 If there is a conflict between these Bylaws and the Act or the regulations under the Act, the Act or the regulations, as the case may be, prevail.

PART 2 – MEMBERS

Application for membership

2.1 A person may apply to the Board for membership in the Society, and the person becomes a member on the Board’s acceptance of the application.

Duties of members

2.2 Every member must uphold the constitution of the Society and must comply with these Bylaws.

Amount of membership dues

2.3 The amount of the annual membership dues, if any, must be determined by the Board.

Member not in good standing

2.4 A member is not in good standing if the member fails to pay the member’s annual membership dues, if any, and the member is not in good standing for so long as those dues remain unpaid.
Member not in good standing may not vote

2.5 A voting member who is not in good standing
   (a) may not vote at a general meeting, and
   (b) is deemed not to be a voting member for the purpose of consenting to
       a resolution of the voting members.

Termination of membership if member not in good standing

2.6 A person’s membership in the Society is terminated if the person is not in
      good standing for 6 consecutive months.

PART 3 – GENERAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Time and place of general meeting

3.1 A general meeting must be held at the time and, if applicable, place the Board
determines.

Ordinary business at general meeting

3.2 At a general meeting, the following business is ordinary business:
   (a) adoption of rules of order;
   (b) consideration of any financial statements of the Society presented to
       the meeting;
   (c) consideration of the reports, if any, of the directors or auditor;
   (d) election or appointment of directors;
   (e) appointment of an auditor, if any;
   (f) business arising out of a report of the directors not requiring the
       passing of a special resolution.

Notice of special business

3.3 A notice of a general meeting must state the nature of any business, other
      than ordinary business, to be transacted at the meeting in sufficient detail to
      permit a member receiving the notice to form a reasoned judgment
      concerning that business.
Chair of general meeting

3.4 The following individual is entitled to preside as the chair of a general meeting:

(a) the individual, if any, appointed by the Board to preside as the chair;
(b) if the Board has not appointed an individual to preside as the chair or the individual appointed by the Board is unable to preside as the chair,
   (i) the president,
   (ii) the vice-president, if the president is unable to preside as the chair, or
   (iii) one of the other directors in attendance at the meeting, if both the president and vice-president are unable to preside as the chair.

Alternate chair of general meeting

3.5 If there is no individual entitled under these Bylaws who is able to preside as the chair of a general meeting within 15 minutes from the time set for holding the meeting, the voting members who are in attendance must elect an individual present at the meeting to preside as the chair.

Quorum required

3.6 Business, other than the election of the chair of the meeting and the adjournment or termination of the meeting, must not be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of voting members is in attendance.

Quorum for general meetings

3.7 The quorum for the transaction of business at a general meeting is 3 voting members or 10% of the voting members, whichever is greater.

Lack of quorum at commencement of meeting

3.8 If, within 30 minutes from the time set for holding a general meeting, a quorum of voting members is not in attendance,

(a) in the case of a meeting convened on the requisition of members, the meeting is terminated, and
(b) in any other case, the meeting stands adjourned to the same day in the next week, at the same time and, if applicable, place, and if, at
the continuation of the adjourned meeting, a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the time set for holding the continuation of the adjourned meeting, the voting members who are present constitute a quorum for that meeting.

If quorum ceases to be present

3.9 If, at any time during a general meeting, there ceases to be a quorum of voting members present, business then in progress must be suspended until there is a quorum in attendance or until the meeting is adjourned or terminated.

Adjournments by chair

3.10 The chair of a general meeting may, or, if so directed by the voting members at the meeting, must, adjourn the meeting from time to time and, if applicable, from place to place, but no business may be transacted at the continuation of the adjourned meeting other than business left unfinished at the adjourned meeting.

Notice of continuation of adjourned general meeting

3.11 It is not necessary to give notice of a continuation of an adjourned general meeting or of the business to be transacted at a continuation of an adjourned general meeting except that, when a general meeting is adjourned for 30 days or more, notice of the continuation of the adjourned meeting must be given.

Order of business at general meeting

3.12 The order of business at a general meeting is as follows:

(a) elect an individual to chair the meeting, if necessary;
(b) determine that there is a quorum;
(c) approve the agenda;
(d) approve the minutes from the last general meeting;
(e) deal with unfinished business from the last general meeting;
(f) if the meeting is an annual general meeting,
   (i) receive the directors’ report on the financial statements of the Society for the previous financial year, and the auditor’s report, if any, on those statements,
(ii) receive any other reports of directors’ activities and decisions since the previous annual general meeting,
(iii) elect or appoint directors, and
(iv) appoint an auditor, if any;

(g) deal with new business, including any matters about which notice has been given to the members in the notice of meeting;

(h) terminate the meeting.

Methods of voting

3.13 At a general meeting, voting must be by a show of hands, an oral vote or another method that adequately discloses the intention of the voting members, except that if, before or after such a vote, 2 or more voting members request a secret ballot or a secret ballot is directed by the chair of the meeting, voting must be by a secret ballot.

Announcement of result

3.14 The chair of a general meeting must announce the outcome of each vote and that outcome must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Proxy voting not permitted

3.15 Voting by proxy is not permitted.

Matters decided at general meeting by ordinary resolution

3.16 A matter to be decided at a general meeting must be decided by ordinary resolution unless the matter is required by the Act or these Bylaws to be decided by special resolution or by another resolution having a higher voting threshold than the threshold for an ordinary resolution.

PART 4 – DIRECTORS

Number of directors on Board

4.1 The Society must have no fewer than 3 and no more than 11 directors.

Election or appointment of directors

4.2 At each annual general meeting, the voting members entitled to vote for the election or appointment of directors must elect or appoint the Board.
Directors may fill casual vacancy on Board

4.3 The Board may, at any time, appoint a member as a director to fill a vacancy that arises on the Board as a result of the resignation, death or incapacity of a director during the director’s term of office.

Term of appointment of director filling casual vacancy

4.4 A director appointed by the Board to fill a vacancy ceases to be a director at the end of the unexpired portion of the term of office of the individual whose departure from office created the vacancy.

PART 5 – DIRECTORS’ MEETINGS

Calling directors’ meeting

5.1 A directors’ meeting may be called by the president or by any 2 other directors.

Notice of directors’ meeting

5.2 At least 2 days’ notice of a directors’ meeting must be given unless all the directors agree to a shorter notice period.

Proceedings valid despite omission to give notice

5.3 The accidental omission to give notice of a directors’ meeting to a director, or the non-receipt of a notice by a director, does not invalidate proceedings at the meeting.

Conduct of directors’ meetings

5.4 The directors may regulate their meetings and proceedings as they think fit.

Quorum of directors

5.5 The quorum for the transaction of business at a directors’ meeting is a majority of the directors.

PART 6 – BOARD POSITIONS

Election or appointment to Board positions

6.1 Directors must be elected or appointed to the following Board positions, and a director, other than the president, may hold more than one position:
Directors at large

6.2 Directors who are elected or appointed to positions on the Board in addition to the positions described in these Bylaws are elected or appointed as directors at large.

Role of president

6.3 The president is the chair of the Board and is responsible for supervising the other directors in the execution of their duties.

Role of vice-president

6.4 The vice-president is the vice-chair of the Board and is responsible for carrying out the duties of the president if the president is unable to act.

Role of secretary

6.5 The secretary is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) issuing notices of general meetings and directors’ meetings;
- (b) taking minutes of general meetings and directors’ meetings;
- (c) keeping the records of the Society in accordance with the Act;
- (d) conducting the correspondence of the Board;
- (e) filing the annual report of the Society and making any other filings with the registrar under the Act.

Absence of secretary from meeting

6.6 In the absence of the secretary from a meeting, the Board must appoint another individual to act as secretary at the meeting.

Role of treasurer
6.7 The treasurer is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

(a) receiving and banking monies collected from the members or other sources;
(b) keeping accounting records in respect of the Society’s financial transactions;
(c) preparing the Society’s financial statements;
(d) making the Society’s filings respecting taxes.

PART 7 – REMUNERATION OF DIRECTORS AND SIGNING AUTHORITY

Remuneration of directors

7.1 These Bylaws do not permit the Society to pay to a director remuneration for being a director, but the Society may, subject to the Act, pay remuneration to a director for services provided by the director to the Society in another capacity.

Signing authority

7.2 A contract or other record to be signed by the Society must be signed on behalf of the Society

(a) by the president, together with one other director,
(b) if the president is unable to provide a signature, by the vice-president together with one other director,
(c) if the president and vice-president are both unable to provide signatures, by any 2 other directors, or
(d) in any case, by one or more individuals authorized by the Board to sign the record on behalf of the Society.
Outer Space Institute Fellows

Aaron Boley, Physics and Astronomy, UBC
Michael Byers, Political Science, UBC
Timiebi Aganaba, ASU, Future of Innovation in Society
Adam Bower, University of St Andrews, School of International Relations
Roohi Dalal, UBC Postdoctoral Fellow in Space Security and Sustainability
Jeffery C. Chancellor, Louisiana State University, Physics & Astronomy
Gerhard Drolshagen, Space Environment Studies, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg
Mac Evans, Former President of the Canadian Space Agency
Robin J. Frank, Former Associate General Counsel, NASA
Steven Freeland, Western Sydney University, Professor Emeritus of International Law
Brett Gladman, UBC Physics and Astronomy
Alice Gorman, Flinders University, Archaeology
Tanya Harrison, Earth and Planetary Institute of Canada
Paul Hickson, UBC Physics and Astronomy
Tara Ivanochko, UBC Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences
Moriba K. Jah, University of Texas, Austin, Aerospace Engineering
Ram S. Jakhu, McGill University, Air and Space Law
Catherine Johnson, UBC Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences
Phyllis Johnson, UBC Sociology
David Kendall, Former Chair of the UN COPUOS
Ellyne Kinney, Director, Technology Strategy at MDA
Sam Lawler, University of Regina, Physics and Astronomy
Margarita Marinova, Development and Systems Engineer, Planetary Scientist, National Academy of Sciences
Paul Meyer, SFU. Former Canadian Ambassador on Disarmament
M.V. Ramana, UBC Public Policy and Global Affairs
Aaron Rosengren, University of California San Diego, Aerospace Engineering
Sara Russel, Natural History Museum UK, Earth Sciences
Janis Sarra, UBC Law
Marie Lucy Stojak, HEC Montréal. Chair, Canadian Space Advisory Board
Peter Suedfeld, UBC Psychology
Jan Wörner, Former ESA Director General

Outer Space Institute Junior Fellows

Deborah Ajayi
Shahed Aljermashi
Cameron Byers
Andrew Falle
Logan Fladeland
Charlotte Hook
Oleksandra (Sasha) Ostapenko
Pauline Pic
Haley Rice
Giuliana Rotola
Andrew Simon-Butler
Sarah Thiele
Ewan Wright
Justin Yau