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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Sixty-seventh session
Vienna, 19–28 June 2024

Draft report

Addendum

Chapter II

Recommendations and decisions

C. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its sixty-third session

1. The Committee took note of the procedural report of the Legal Subcommittee on its sixty-third session ([A/AC.105/L.311](#)), which did not constitute a precedent for future reports.
2. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Santiago Ripol Carulla (Spain) for his able leadership as Chair during the sixty-third session of the Subcommittee.
3. The representatives of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements under the item. A statement was also made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the agenda item were also made by other member States.
4. The Committee heard the following presentations:
 - (a) “Chilean legal recognition of the need for ‘dark skies’ for science and society”, by the representative of Chile;
 - (b) “Cooperative remediation of massive derelicts – now is the time to begin”, by the observers for Three Country – Trusted Broker.

1. Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law

5. The Committee noted the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law and the role of such organizations in the development, strengthening and furtherance of the understanding of international space law.



6. The Committee agreed that it was important to continue to exchange information on recent developments in the area of space law with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and that such organizations should once again be invited to report to the Subcommittee, at its sixty-fourth session, on their activities relating to space law.

2. Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space, and ways and means, including capacity-building, to promote their implementation

7. The Committee had before it a document entitled “Draft report on the Chair of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space” (A/AC.105/C.2/L.331).

8. The Committee welcomed with appreciation the growing number of States parties to the five United Nations treaties on outer space and encouraged those States that had not yet become parties to the treaties to consider doing so.

9. The Committee noted that space activities should be conducted in conformity with applicable international space law, because space activities were expanding due to the growing number of space actors and benefits derived from space science technology and applications. To that end, States needed to ensure, through their national legal frameworks, that those activities were in compliance with the United Nations treaties on outer space, in order to ensure the sustainability of outer space activities. They could also consider reviewing their national legal frameworks as necessary.

10. The Committee noted that various actions had been taken by member States to review, strengthen, develop or draft national space laws and policies, and to reform or establish the governance of national space activities.

11. The view was expressed that, given the growth of space activities, there was a need to continuously improve international and national regulations on space activities, which included considering the transformation of non-legally binding instruments, such as recommendations, into obligations.

12. The Committee noted that it was important to enhance the practice of registration, in particular with regard to large constellations and megaconstellations, and noted with appreciation the adoption by the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space of the recommendations concerning the submission of registration information on space objects forming part of a satellite constellation.

13. The Committee noted that the implementation of article XI of the Outer Space Treaty was important in enhancing transparency among member States and welcomed the work of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, which focused on the exchange of views on the implementation of that article and had been reconvened under the chairmanship of Franziska Knur (Germany).

14. At its 822nd meeting, on 21 June, the Committee endorsed the report of the Chair of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, contained in annex II to the present report.

15. Some delegations expressed the view that the development of a template as a voluntary tool for submitting information to the Secretary-General was important and may provide a valuable opportunity to explore ways to benefit from article XI.

16. The view was expressed that the creation of alternative forums for discussion was concerning, since shifting the discussion of relevant issues to such forums, such as the open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, undermined the mandate of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

17. The Committee agreed that capacity-building, training and education in space law were of paramount importance to national, regional and international efforts to further develop the practical aspects of space science and technology, in particular in developing countries, and to increase knowledge of the legal framework within which space activities were carried out. That would encourage States to ratify the five United Nations treaties on outer space and support the implementation of those treaties and the establishment of national institutions, and would make international space law more accessible and better known by all sectors of civil society.

18. The Committee noted with appreciation that a number of national, regional and international efforts to build capacity in space law were being undertaken by governmental and non-governmental entities.

19. The Committee noted with appreciation the activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to enhance understanding of space law, including the United Nations Conference on Space Law and Policy, the Space Law for New Space Actors project, the Registration Project and a project on awareness-raising and capacity-building related to the implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

20. The Committee also noted capacity-building efforts such as the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition, studies conducted as part of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum National Space Legislation Initiative, the establishment of the Space Law Alliance, led by APSCO, and the annual space law symposium by IISL and the European Centre for Space Law.

21. The Committee welcomed the ongoing work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to develop an online registration portal to ensure the efficiency of registration submissions.

22. The Committee noted that the Office would update its publication on United Nations instruments on space law in 2024 and planned to produce a publication on registration of space objects launched into outer space in the biennium 2025–2026.

23. The Committee noted that the Office had updated the directory of educational opportunities in space law (A/AC.105/C.2/2024/CRP.7), including the information on available fellowships and scholarships, and agreed that the Office should continue to update the directory. In that connection, the Subcommittee invited member States to encourage contributions at the national level for the future updating of the directory.

24. The Committee agreed that it was important to continue to regularly exchange information on developments in the area of national space-related regulatory frameworks. In that regard, the Committee encouraged member States to continue to submit to the secretariat the texts of their national space laws and regulations and to provide updates and inputs for the schematic overview of national regulatory frameworks for space activities.

25. The Committee recommended that States members and permanent observers of the Committee inform the Subcommittee, at its sixty-fourth session, of any action taken or planned at the national, regional or international levels to build capacity in space law.

3. Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and 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

26. The Committee noted that, pursuant to the agreement of the Working Group on the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space in 2021 (A/AC.105/1243, annex II, para. 6), the Working Group had not met in 2024, but would meet again at the sixty-fourth session of the Legal Subcommittee, in 2025, and that, as per the agreement reached in 2023 (A/AC.105/1285, annex II, paras. 8 and 9), new documentation would also be prepared by the secretariat for the sixty-fourth session.

27. Some delegations expressed the view that the definition and delimitation of outer space remained an important topic that should be kept on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee, and that more work should be done in order to establish the legal regime applicable to airspace and outer space.

28. Some delegations expressed the view that the geostationary orbit was not to be subject to national appropriation, by means of use, repeated use or occupation, or by any other means, and that its utilization was to be governed by applicable international law.

29. Some delegations expressed the view that the geostationary orbit needed to be used rationally, efficiently and economically, in conformity with the provisions of the international space laws and relevant regulations, so that countries or groups of countries could have equitable access to those orbits and frequencies, taking into account the special needs of developing countries and the geographical situation of particular countries.

30. The view was expressed that the rational use of the geostationary orbit contributed to fostering social and educational projects and, therefore, it was necessary to develop a juridical regime that promoted equitable access to orbital slots that gave special attention to satellite projects pursuing social benefits, while taking into consideration and respecting the role of ITU.

4. Future role and method of work of the Committee

31. The Committee noted that the Subcommittee had considered the item on the future role and method of work of the Committee.

32. The view was expressed that guidelines on procedural methods of work of the Committee should be developed to prevent procedural disagreements that could hinder the adoption of reports of the Committee and its subcommittees.

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

33. The Committee had before it the following:

(a) Draft report of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities ([A/AC.105/C.2/L.332](#));

(b) Report on the International Conference on Space Resources, including the results of the expert meeting collecting preliminary inputs for consideration at the international conference in Vienna in 2024 ([A/AC.105/C.2/122](#)).

34. At its 822nd meeting, the Committee endorsed the report of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, contained in annex III to the present report.

35. The Committee noted with appreciation the International Conference on Space Resources and the expert meeting collecting preliminary inputs for consideration at the international conference in Vienna in 2024, which had provided important contributions to the work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities in addressing the multifaceted nature of the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources and in assessing the benefits of further development of a framework for such activities.

36. Some delegations welcomed the progress made in the Working Group and reiterated their call for greater coordination at the international level to ensure the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space, the Moon and other celestial bodies and the conduct of space resource activities in accordance with international law and for the benefit of all.

37. Some delegations expressed the view that legal guidance was necessary to ensure that space resource activities were carried out in accordance with international law and in a safe, sustainable, rational, transparent and peaceful manner. The

delegations expressing that view were also of the view that a legal or normative framework should be developed multilaterally under the Legal Subcommittee, and that the Working Group was the appropriate forum in which to hold discussions on the matter.

38. Some delegations expressed the view that the information collected from stakeholders at the International Conference on Space Resources about the legal framework for space resource activities, together with the preliminary inputs collected at the expert meeting, should be considered by the Working Group in the development of an initial set of recommended principles for space resource activities.

39. The view was expressed that the basic principles set forth in the Outer Space Treaty, including the peaceful uses of outer space, the pursuit of activities for the benefit and in the interests of all humankind, non-appropriation, international cooperation, due regard, and compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, should be applied to space resource activities. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that the preliminary principles developed by the Working Group should be based on existing international space law and emphasize the interpretation and application of outer space law to space resource activities, in particular that the conduct of space resource activities for scientific purposes should not be unduly affected by the conduct of such activities for commercial purposes; that coordination among actors should be strengthened; that the principle of mutual assistance should be implemented; that the development of space resource activities should be safe and orderly; that regulation of the space resource activities of non-governmental entities should be strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of the obligations of States under the Outer Space Treaty; and that full consideration should be given to the sustainability of resources on the Moon and other celestial bodies in order to achieve intergenerational equity.

40. The view was expressed that equal access to all material and non-material space resources should be ensured by providing fair opportunities to utilize space resources jointly with other countries or through international collaboration. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that the regulatory framework should be completed before the actual exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources.

41. The view was expressed that international cooperation and multi-stakeholder dialogue were indispensable for creating an environment conducive to the conduct of space resource activities, and that the principle of adaptive governance should be applied so that emerging issues could be incrementally addressed on the basis of ever-evolving technology and practices.

42. The view was expressed that the technical mandate of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies needed to be strictly preserved, including with respect to the discussions on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that since maritime law and airspace law had different dynamics and were regulated by different regimes and instruments not related to outer space, they were outside the scope and mandate of the Committee and should, therefore, not be used as a basis.

43. The view was expressed that the legal aspects of space resource exploration and exploitation must be regulated by international law. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that past legal experience in that respect included the administration of the international seabed by the International Seabed Authority established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the frequency spectrum management regime of ITU and the legal regime governing Antarctica, and that that long-established, solid international legal practice, adopted within the framework of the United Nations system of which the Committee was also part, could serve as an inspirational tool and guide in the development of a legal framework for space resource activities.

44. Some delegations expressed the view that regulations developed by the Working Group must be binding in order to guarantee the preservation of outer space from the harmful methods of exploitation promoted by humanity throughout history, guarantee their long-term sustainability, favour developing countries and protect the Earth's biosphere from the entry of space material that could affect its delicate ecosystem.

45. The view was expressed that guidelines for upcoming missions to the Moon and deep space were necessary in order to establish a regulatory framework that promoted international cooperation and ensured the fair and equitable exploration and exploitation of space resources and that the benefits of such exploration were widely shared.

6. 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

46. The Committee had before it a conference room paper entitled "Through a glass darkly – how four good ideas are inhibiting remediation of orbital debris", prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from Three Country – Trusted Broker (A/AC.105/2024/CRP.16).

47. The Committee noted with satisfaction that some States had taken measures to implement internationally recognized guidelines and standards relating to space debris, including the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Committee, through relevant provisions in their national legislation.

48. The Committee agreed that States members of the Committee and international intergovernmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee should be invited to contribute further to the compendium of space debris mitigation standards adopted by States and international organizations by providing or updating information on any legislation or standards adopted with regard to space debris mitigation using the template provided for that purpose. The Committee also agreed that all other States Members of the United Nations should be invited to contribute to the compendium and encouraged States with such regulations or standards to provide information on them.

49. Some delegations expressed the view that the capacities of developing countries in detecting and responding to falling space debris should be strengthened, and that launching States should give advanced, proper, prompt and adequate notification to other States, in particular developing countries, located along the drop zones of falling space debris, to ensure that those States were sufficiently prepared to mitigate and respond to such incidents.

50. The view was expressed that new binding instruments to regulate space activities should be created, using as a reference the practice and some elements of the non-binding instruments related to space debris and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

51. Some delegations expressed the view that addressing space debris required urgent and collective efforts in terms of both debris mitigation and remediation measures, including active debris removal, and that it was necessary to accelerate discussions on the legal framework for space debris mitigation and remediation under the framework of the Committee.

52. The view was expressed that leading spacefaring nations bore significant responsibility for addressing the growing problem of space debris and that it was necessary to foster a cooperative environment that would not impede the rights of developing countries to partake in the exploration and use of outer space.

7. General exchange of information on non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space

53. The Committee took note of the compendium on mechanisms adopted by States and international organizations in relation to non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space, which was available on a dedicated page on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and encouraged States members of the Committee and international intergovernmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee to continue to share information on their practices related to non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space.

54. Some delegations highlighted the importance of developing further non-legally binding United Nations instruments that complemented and supported the existing United Nations treaties on outer space and that were responsive to new developments in space activities and contributed to further enhancing the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities.

55. Some delegations expressed the view that while it was important to further develop non-legally binding United Nations instruments, it was equally important to develop legally binding international treaties and agreements in a number of areas related to space activities in order to keep pace with their rapid development; that immense responsibility lay with the Legal Subcommittee.

56. The view was expressed that non-legally binding United Nations instruments played an important role in shaping national space policies and laws, contributing significantly to international cooperation and capacity-building efforts.

8. General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management

57. The Committee had before it a conference room paper entitled “Proposal for a study group on perspectives for space traffic management”, submitted by Germany (A/AC.105/2024/CRP.21).

58. Some delegations welcomed the proposal by Germany to establish a study group on perspectives for space traffic management as an important step towards advancing understanding of the topic in the Legal Subcommittee, and expressed the view that the organization by Argentina, Germany and Japan of informal consultations during the sixty-third session of the Legal Subcommittee had supported transparency and outreach, allowing a more in-depth examination of the proposal.

59. Some delegations expressed the view that it was crucial to implement existing instruments of global governance of outer space activities and to establish frameworks for space traffic management and space debris disposal and removal activities.

9. General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities

60. The Committee noted that the item continued to be on the agenda of the Subcommittee and agreed that its retention contributed to addressing and raising awareness of issues relating to the use of small satellites.

61. The Committee noted that activities involving small satellites should be carried out in compliance with existing international frameworks, including the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space, the ITU Constitution and Convention and the ITU Radio Regulations, and non-binding instruments such as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines and the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Affairs of the Committee (A/74/20, annex II), which should be implemented in national legislation.

62. The Committee recalled the joint ITU/Office for Outer Space Affairs document providing guidance on space object registration and frequency management for small and very small satellites and the background paper prepared by the Secretariat, entitled “Registration of large constellations and megaconstellations” (A/AC.105/C.2/L.322).

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

63. On the basis of the procedural report of the Subcommittee on its sixty-third session ([A/AC.105/L.338](#), para. 16), the Committee agreed that the following substantive items should be considered by the Subcommittee at its sixty-fourth session:

Regular items

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Statement by the Chair.
3. General exchange of views.
4. Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law.
5. Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space, and ways and means, including capacity-building, to promote their implementation.
6. 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.
7. Future role and method of work of the Committee.

Items under workplans

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

(Work for 2025 as reflected in the multi-year workplan of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities ([A/AC.105/L.338](#), para. 206, and annex II, appendix))

Single issues/items for discussion

9. 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.
10. General exchange of information on non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space.
11. General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management.
12. General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities.

New item

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

64. The Committee agreed that the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, the Working Group on the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space and the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities should be reconvened at the sixty-fourth session of the Subcommittee.

65. The Committee, recalling the agreement by the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-eighth session, in 2019, to provisionally suspend the item on “Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space” pending the outcome of the work of the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, and noting the Working Group’s new five-year workplan (A/AC.105/1307, annex III, para. 6), agreed to continue to suspend consideration of the item until the completion of work under the new workplan.

66. The Committee agreed that IISL and the European Centre for Space Law should again be invited to organize a symposium, to be held during the sixty-fourth 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.

67. The Committee noted that the secretariat had tentatively scheduled the sixty-fourth session of the Subcommittee to be held from 5 to 16 May 2025.
