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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space  
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
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Vienna, 3–14 February 2025  
Item 10 of the provisional agenda\*  
Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

**The need for a substantive conclusion to the Working Group  
on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities  
and next steps**

**Conference room paper by Canada, Chile, France, the Philippines, Spain and  
the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The present conference room paper was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from Canada, Chile, France, the Philippines, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The information was reproduced in the form it was received.

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\* [A/AC.105/C.1/L.418](#).



## **The Need for a Substantive Conclusion to the Long-term Sustainability Working Group and Next Steps**

### **Paper Submitted by Canada, Chile, France, the Philippines, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.**

#### *Introduction*

1. As outlined in [A/AC.105/1258](#) the work plan for the current Working Group is scheduled to conclude in 2026 with the release of a final report which includes “information on” and “recommendations” related to each of the three key elements<sup>1</sup> within the mandate of the current Working Group. Reaching a substantive consensus report in 2026 is important to ensure that United Nations COPUOS continues to be seen as a competent intergovernmental organization that can achieve meaningful results. Beyond that, consensus outcomes from this Working Group in 2026 would support the targeted development of deliverables for a potential UNISPACE IV in 2027.

2. During the sixty-seventh session of United Nations COPUOS, the Working Group agreed to undertake a “challenge-led” process using the Chair’s table to approach the discussion of recommendations in a systematic and evidenced-based fashion (see [A/79/20](#), paras. 142–144) to underpin the development of the final report of the Working Group, as agreed in workplan ([A/AC.105/1258](#), annex II, appendix). This process has uncovered several valuable insights that could form the basis of future work within this subcommittee.

#### *The Need for a Substantive Conclusion*

3. Therefore, there is a need for a substantive final report from this Working Group that encompasses recommendations across the four areas within the group’s mandate. This is not only to have a clear outcome from the expertise, time, and resources dedicated to this Working Group, but also to form the basis for future discussions. These recommendations should focus on addressing implementation challenges, exploring methods to improve capacity building, and identifying new challenges or emerging areas for future activities and work that may impact the long-term sustainability of outer-space activities, aligned with the mandate of this group.

4. As COPUOS is a consensus-based committee, the recommendations on future activities and work should be a consensus-based outcome, as these recommendations will serve as the basis for follow-on work on long-term sustainability, which could include a future working group. The final report could also contain a non-consensus annex of suggested new challenges or emerging areas of interest for long-term sustainability, which would allow for a broader range of views that could be used to inform the development of proposals or potential new guidelines. In order to support constructive dialogue during this session, an annex (pg.3) is included that proposes a starting point for consensus recommendations across all four areas and provides a basis for further dialogue and consensus-building.

#### *Next Steps*

5. The most pragmatic way to continue these important discussions and build on the recommendations made as an outcome of this Working Group would be to establish a new Working Group subsequent to the conclusion of the current Working Group’s mandate. With the growing challenges to the long-term sustainability of the

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<sup>1</sup> The LTS “2.0” Working Group is structured to address three key elements of equal importance: (a) identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines; (b) sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation; and, (c) raising awareness and building capacity.

outer space environment and increasing dialogue on space sustainability across several forums, a new Working Group would also ensure the discussion on long-term sustainability continues within United Nations COPUOS.

6. Should this idea obtain broad member State support, a new Working Group should include Expert Groups to enable the substantive exchange of ideas and expertise. One issue that has become apparent during the challenge-based discussions in the current Working Group is the difficulty of holding substantive discussions due to the lack of real-time expert input. A future working group could consider organizing itself thematically, to advance key challenges to sustainability. For instance, this could make a tangible contribution to advancing dialogue on space debris and space situational awareness and promoting a global SSA coordination between existing and developing systems in various regions around the world. This could also provide a future-focused framework to address the recommendations on future activities and work from the current Working Group in a way that ensures United Nations COPUOS continues to play a central role in the governance of outer space.

## **Annex: Possible Recommendations to Include in the Report of the Long-term Sustainability Working Group**

### **A. Information on the identification and study of challenges, and corresponding recommendations, as well as possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

(i) Further study of the repeated themes within the challenge process, including discussion of challenges which appear in multiple guideline areas (themes A–D in existing guidelines).

(ii) Consideration of forming an expert group to discuss possible thematic areas or potential new guidelines, such as:

- Space situational awareness, including related information-sharing and coordination, if not addressed through a different United Nations COPUOS action group;
- Design and operation of small-sized space objects;
- Space debris [and space debris mitigation] and on-orbit missions;
- The sustainability of deep space missions;
- Safety considerations with respect to sustainability for human spaceflight;
- Potential findings on Dark [and Quiet] Skies [and megaconstellations].

### **B. Information on experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary implementation of the adopted Guidelines and recommendations for their further practical implementation**

(i) Restate implementation of the adopted Guidelines as the primary course of action.

(ii) Use of the repository to capture voluntary implementation.

(iii) Gap analysis of non-governmental entities that are needed to address the long-term sustainability of outer space environment (noting a number of guidelines mention non-government bodies but are not specific on who or how these should be engaged).

(iv) Guidelines specific recommendations, including:

- States should have awareness of the location and status of their in-orbit space objects. [Guideline B.1, B.2]
- Communication, coordination and collaboration between existing or developing space situational awareness (SSA) systems in the different regions of the world should be promoted, through routine exchange of information on space objects and events in order to improve space safety and sustainability. [Guideline A.5, B.3]
- Awareness raising should be encouraged to sensitize all space operators to the risk of collision in an increasingly congested outer space and to the importance of inter-operator coordination. [Guideline B.1, B.4]
- A recommendation could be that States should consider implementing navigation and anti-collision mechanisms to safeguard the sustainability of current and future outer space activities. [Guideline B.4/variant of 5b in Intercessional Non-Paper]
- [Guideline D.2]:
  1. States should consider ongoing monitoring and regular reporting mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of measures for mitigating space debris.
  2. States [space-service providers] should consider incentives for the development of new technologies and innovative practices to help mitigate the creation of new space debris.
  3. Public-private partnerships should be encouraged to accelerate the adoption and implementation of new space debris mitigation technologies.

**C. Information on and recommendations for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including those related to improving international cooperation in capacity-building, taking into particular consideration the requirements of emerging space nations and developing countries**

- (i) UNOOSA strategy should continue to support capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in areas linked to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.
- (ii) Encourage developed space nations to continue to share insights into operational and design approaches to address challenges related to sustainability of the outer space environment.
- (iii) A common approach to registering constellations to improve efficiency and completeness could be shared [by UNOOSA].
- (iv) A glossary to facilitate the understanding and harmonisation of specific terminology shared by all member States could be developed.
- (v) Conduct outreach with industry and academia to promote the development and use of techniques and methods to improve knowledge. This includes participating in conferences, workshops, and exercises.
- (vi) Development of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and factsheets on specific aspects of Guideline implementation/the long-term sustainability of outer space activities can help with the development of capacity-building among emerging and established countries.

**D. Recommendations on future activities and work.**

- (i) Leverage opportunities through STSC, LSC, and COPUOS to bring experts together to exchange best practices related to the challenges identified.
  - (ii) Advance capacity-building discussions.
  - (iii) Establishment of a new Working Group (LTS 3.0) at the conclusion of the current mandate with a work plan that includes expert groups. The duration and the Chairmanship of the WG are to be decided.
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