



# General Assembly

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## Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

### **Report on the United Nations/Chile Conference on Space Law and Policy: “Governance and legal perspectives on space activities in Earth orbit and beyond”**

(Online, 10–12 May 2022)

#### **I. Introduction**

##### **A. Background and objectives**

1. The United Nations Conference on Space Law and Policy on the theme “Governance and legal perspectives on space activities in Earth orbit and beyond”, was held online from 10 to 12 May 2022. It was organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, with the support of the Government of Chile, the Chilean Air Force and the National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies of Chile.
2. The Conference was preceded by a long-standing series of capacity-building workshops on space law that have been organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs since 2002 in cooperation with and hosted by, in chronological order, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Brazil, Nigeria, Ukraine, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Thailand, Argentina and China. The most recent workshop was hosted by the Office and held at the United Nations Office at Vienna.
3. In 2018, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, building on the preceding workshops, moved to the next phase of its capacity-building efforts by launching a new series of United Nations conferences dedicated to space law and policy. The first conference was organized jointly with the Government of the Russian Federation and sponsored by the State Space Corporation “Roscosmos”, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Roscosmos Academy, and held in Moscow from 11 to 13 September 2018. The second conference was organized jointly with the Government of Türkiye, the Space Technologies Research Institute (TÜBITAK UZAY), the Turkish Space Agency and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, and held in Istanbul, Türkiye, from 23 to 26 September 2019. In the following year, the Office organized another Conference on Space Law and Policy, on the theme “Emerging issues in space law and policy: perspectives of African nations”, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and with the support of the African Union Commission, which was held online from 8 to 10 December 2020.
4. International and regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space helps to bring the benefits of space technology applications to a wide range of stakeholders,



both governmental and non-governmental, and to intensify and diversify national space programmes. Policy and regulatory frameworks at the national, regional and international levels are of paramount importance in providing the necessary basis for States, in particular developing States, to meet development goals and address challenges to sustainable development. In this connection, it is necessary to continue to strengthen the linkages between international space law and the conduct of space activities.

5. At the present Conference, the following topics were addressed: overview of the legal regime of outer space and governance; perspectives on space traffic management and the governance of outer space activities; the governance of activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies specifically in relation to space resources; and the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities in the context of overall governance perspectives.

6. The topic of the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources brings scientific and technical aspects of space activities and international space law together in new and undefined ways. While the manner in which such activities are carried out raises novel legal issues, there has been a concerted global effort to understand what is permissible under the existing international space law regime. The Conference addressed this issue in the context of the newly established Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Other topics addressed at the Conference included space traffic management, large constellations and megaconstellations, and dark and quiet skies. The latest developments in the work to implement the agenda set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” ([A/75/982](#)) and in the preparations for the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024, were also addressed.

7. Each year, in its annual resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the General Assembly reaffirms the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of international law, including the relevant norms of international space law and their important role in international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet new and emerging challenges, especially for developing countries. The Assembly also recognizes that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, with a view to promoting and strengthening international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

8. In today’s world, where the number of actors engaging in space activities is constantly increasing, it is of utmost importance to ensure that all actors comply with the requirements of international space law in developing international and regional space cooperation.

9. The successful implementation and application of the international legal framework governing space activities depends on the understanding and acceptance of that framework by policymakers and decision makers. The availability of professionals who can provide suitable legal advice and disseminate information and knowledge about space law, in particular in developing countries, depends on the availability of adequate educational opportunities in space law and policy. In that connection, the Conference was held in order to promote adherence to the five United Nations treaties on outer space and assist States in building their capacity in space law, and thus help them to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. The Conference had the following overall objectives:

(a) Promote understanding, acceptance and implementation of the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space;

(b) Consider the contribution of space law to economic and social development;

- (c) Consider trends in and challenges to international space law;
  - (d) Discuss novel areas in which international space law could provide potential legal models to balance divergent interests of States;
  - (e) Consider mechanisms for increasing regional and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.
11. The observations and conclusions set out in section II of the present report reflect a number of concrete elements covered in the Conference discussions.
12. The present report will be submitted to the Legal Subcommittee for consideration at its sixty-second session.

## **B. Attendance**

13. Decision makers and policymakers from national space agencies and governmental bodies, experts from the space community, business experts and researchers, students and specialists from academia involved in space activities from the following countries participated in the Conference: Austria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Representatives of the International Telecommunication Union, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the European Southern Observatory and the Office for Outer Space Affairs also participated in the Conference.

## **C. Programme**

14. The Acting Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Head of the Division of International and Human Security of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile and the Deputy Secretary of Defence of the Ministry of Defence of Chile made welcoming remarks. It was noted in particular that there were many opportunities to utilize space science and technology in Latin America for the benefit of all people and that unlocking those opportunities for end users of services would contribute to economic development. The importance of building the capacity of States in Latin America to utilize space applications and services as a way to inspire students to pursue educational programmes in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics was also stressed.

15. On the first day of the Conference, the international legal regime for outer space, including the promotion of the responsible, peaceful and safe use of outer space, was addressed. Presentations were given on the following topics:

- (a) The legal regime of outer space: an overview of fundamental principles of international space law;
- (b) The application of international law to space activities, including aspects of customary international law;
- (c) International space law and the environment;
- (d) Governance and space law and policy development from a Latin American perspective;

(e) The role of the Legal Subcommittee in the global governance of outer space activities;

(f) Norms of responsible conduct followed and promoted by Chile in outer space activities.

16. The activities on the second day of the Conference concerned perspectives on space traffic management and the governance of outer space activities. Presentations were given on the following topics:

(a) United Nations Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space;

(b) Frequency allocation for operations free from interference in outer space;

(c) Update on the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment (the Cape Town Convention) and its Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets: perspectives on the space economy;

(d) Bringing the benefits of space to all countries: a guidance document on the legal framework for space activities, and an overview of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities;

(e) The question of the definition and delimitation of outer space: perspectives on governance and space traffic management;

(f) Dark and quiet skies: the impact of space activities on terrestrial astronomical observations – governance perspectives;

(g) Towards a regime for space traffic management: governance perspectives.

17. The activities on the third day of the Conference concerned the governance of activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies and the question of space resources, as well as the overall governance perspectives of safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities. Presentations were given on the following topics:

(a) The establishment of the working group on legal models for the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources in the Legal Subcommittee;

(b) Key legal challenges arising from natural resource extraction from celestial bodies;

(c) Overview of the building blocks for space resources as a potential legal framework for the sustainable exploration of celestial bodies;

(d) Governance of the Moon and other celestial bodies based on a common and coordinated vision: perspectives from developing countries;

(e) Governance and the question of the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities;

(f) Space and “Our Common Agenda”.

18. The Conference ended with a session on conclusions and observations.

19. An introductory note on the Conference, the Conference programme and the presentations given at the Conference are available on the website of the Office ([www.unoosa.org](http://www.unoosa.org)).

## **II. Observations and conclusions**

20. The Conference participants heard with interest the presentations and the panel discussion and actively engaged in discussions and thereafter arrived at the following observations and conclusions regarding space law and policy taking into consideration Latin American perspectives:

(a) The Conference highlighted numerous aspects of global governance of outer space activities, principles of international space law, and mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration on space activities;

(b) The fundamental principles of space law remain relevant and topical even after more than 50 years since they were enshrined in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, of 1967. Approaches to implementing those principles have ranged from formal treaty-making in the early days to the adoption of principles, and now to modern voluntary instruments such as the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, adopted by the Committee in 2019 ([A/74/20](#), annex II), which has marked a new chapter in applying a multilateral approach to the progressive development of space law;

(c) The Committee and its Legal Subcommittee and Scientific and Technical Subcommittee remain instrumental in serving as the international forum for strengthening governance and cooperation. The multilateral approach to solving global problems in space will remain essential in addressing emerging issues;

(d) The international space community is encouraged to work together to find suitable solutions to common challenges. Among other matters being addressed are emerging environmental concerns and ensuring the safety of space operations. Space traffic management, the utilization of space resources, and the protection of dark and quiet skies are examples of novel areas in which multilateral discussions are currently being undertaken;

(e) Multilateralism offers opportunities for all States to contribute to the global governance of outer space activities and the progressive development of international space law;

(f) As space becomes more accessible to new actors, the fundamental principle set out in the Outer Space Treaty that States are under an obligation to provide authorization for and continuing supervision of the activities of their non-governmental entities is now more important than ever before. In this regard, States are encouraged to develop national coordination mechanisms with their private actors in order to facilitate fulfilling their treaty obligations;

(g) The integration of international space law into national regulatory frameworks enables States to consider ways to promote the space economy and use their national and commercial space programmes in order to gain the benefits of space science and technology for their citizens;

(h) Increased capacity-building is key to enabling States to make the most out of what space has to offer. Robust space laws and policies at the national level can facilitate many aspects of capacity-building, from inspiring students, in particular young girls, to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, to building national and commercial capacity to operate space assets. In this regard, it was recognized that there were many opportunities to strengthen capacity-building in the fields of space science and technology and their applications, and space law and policy, through student-centred programmes in universities and educational institutions at all levels, thereby providing a catalyst for growth and economic development.

### III. Concluding remarks

21. Participants in the Conference expressed their deep appreciation to the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of Chile, the Chilean Air Force and the National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies of Chile for organizing the Conference, as it had shed light on several emerging issues in space law and policy from the perspective of States in Latin America.