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First Committee

Programme for the joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability

Prepared by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Office for Disarmament Affairs

Mandate

By its resolution 71/90, the General Assembly “*decides* to convene, within existing resources, a joint half-day panel discussion of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to constitute a joint contribution by the First and Fourth Committees to the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies ...”

Programme¹

The 60th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space took note of the proposed concept note by the Secretariat on the joint panel discussion and made recommendations for consideration jointly by the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly, as contained in document A/72/20, paragraph 339. Those recommendations are reflected in the programme.

Thursday, 12 October 2017

- 10:00-10:10 a.m. Opening of the panel discussion by the Chairs of the First and Fourth Committees
- 10:10-10:30 a.m. Keynote addresses by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs
- 10:30-11:30 a.m. Presentations by invited panellists from the broader space community, including academia, civil society, industry and the private sector, taking into account gender-balanced representation and youth representation
- Satellite industry interaction with Governments to support the long term sustainability of space*
Ms. Charity Weeden, Satellite Industry Association
- Outer space security: identifying challenges and solutions*
Ms. Laura Grego, Union of Concerned Scientists
- Technological innovation of space activities and private actors cooperation in support to the broader outer space legal regime*
Ms. Daniela Genta, Airbus
Ms. Joanne Wheeler, Bird & Bird
- A Fragmenting Regime? Prospects for the Future of Outer Space Governance*
Ms. Jessica West, Project Ploughshares
- 11:30 a.m.-
1:00 p.m. Interactive dialogue by Member States²
Question and answers with the invited panellists

* A/71/150

¹ A Co-Chairs' summary of the panel discussion and interactive dialogue will be issued after the conclusion of the panel discussion.

² Delegations are kindly requested to limit their statements to three minutes. Longer versions of statements will be posted on the Committee Place portal.

Indicative themes of the panel discussion in support of the interactive dialogue

The panel discussion will address the general topic of possible challenges to space security and sustainability, taking into account ongoing deliberations within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Conference of Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission related to addressing possible challenges to space security and sustainability.

The overarching theme is the 50th anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty, taking into account its past, present and future. The Outer Space Treaty, in particular its Articles III and IV, provides a common ground for a comprehensive dialogue in the First and Fourth Committees in view of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty.

The panel presentation is intended to serve as a starting point for the subsequent interactive discussion.

The following indicative themes and related indicative questions are suggested to promote a comprehensive debate and serve as the frame for the overall joint panel discussion, and to promote a focused and structured interactive dialogue among delegations:

1) *The Outer Space Treaty - 50 years in service for the peaceful uses of outer space and in maintaining international peace and security:*

- Considering that the achievements in space exploration and the development of space science and technology and their applications and spin-offs have exceeded all expectations at the time of the inception of the Treaty, to what extent does the Treaty continue to serve all States, regardless of their level of development, in facilitating international cooperation and coordination for the benefit of space economy, space society, space accessibility and space diplomacy for the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities?
- What measures need to be considered to achieve universalization of the Treaty, and what increased role could regional and interregional cooperation and coordination play in advancing the peaceful exploration and use of outer space?

2) *The legal regime of outer space and global governance of outer space activities:*

- Are recent scientific, technological and military developments, as well as the increasing participation of new space actors, giving rise to a need to strengthen or supplement the legal and global governance regime for outer space activities, in order to ensure security and sustainability?
- What role can voluntary non-legally binding instruments play in supplementing legally binding treaties and instruments to secure the future sustainability of outer space activities and the use of space assets and systems for the benefit of all nations and their economic, social and cultural development?

3) *Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes:*

- How can United Nations bodies best facilitate the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities in order to ensure the safety of space operations and the security of space assets and space systems, and ultimately to assist in maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and in helping to prevent an arms race in outer space?
- What role could the broader space community have in this regard, including international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, industry and private sector, and academia and civil society?

4) *Efforts to ensure space sustainability for all nations:*

- Considering that outer space activities continue to hold immense potential to further advance human knowledge, drive socioeconomic progress and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, what measures for capacity-building, training, information exchange and technology exchange would facilitate efforts to ensure the security and sustainability of outer space activities for all nations, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development?
- What increased role could the United Nations system play in promoting and building the necessary capacity of all nations to be able to access space, including access to space-derived data and information, access to the participation in and the benefits of space exploration efforts, and access to continuous safe and secure space operations?

Abstracts of the panel presentations

Satellite Industry Interaction with Government to support the Long Term Sustainability of Space

Ms. Charity Weeden, Senior Director of Policy, Satellite Industry Association

The presentation will discuss the increasing role of commercial satellites, applications, and downstream benefits and how the satellite industry engages with government to support long-term sustainability of space. Commercial satellite activity has progressed over the decades. Many new commercial applications are now emerging to benefit activities on Earth, like broadband access and access to remote sensing data. The growth of the industry with respect to economic and social benefits will be discussed as well as the importance of long-term sustainability efforts for commercial space development. The relationships that the satellite industry has with government, either through formal or informal engagement will be discussed along with industry activities in ensuring awareness of precise location of satellites and data sharing.

Outer space security: identifying challenges and solutions

Ms. Laura Grego, Senior Scientist, Union of Concerned Scientists

In the decades since the ratification of the Outer Space Treaty, space has evolved from being the domain primarily of two superpowers to supporting a vibrant ecology of critical economic, scientific, and civil activities for more than eighty countries. However, space continues to be important for national security purposes and will not be insulated from conflict on the ground. The rapid development and spread of security-relevant space technologies is bringing critical questions forward. How do we ensure that the great benefits humankind accrues from space continue to be available into the future? How do we minimize opportunities for space activities to spark or accelerate terrestrial crises, and to balance national security interests with the freedom to use space for peaceful purposes?

The golden anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty is a prime opportunity for the international community to engage on substantive discussions on these critical and time-sensitive issues. Additionally, civil society has an important role to play. For example, a team of legal and technical experts are preparing The Manual on International Law Applicable to the Military Uses of Outer Space (MILAMOS), a manual aimed at clarifying the constraints that existing international law places on the military use of outer space in times of peace, as well as in periods of tension and in outright armed conflict.

Technological innovation of space activities and private actors cooperation in support to the broader legal regime of outer space

Ms. Daniela Genta, Policy and Market Access Director, Airbus

Ms. Joanne Wheeler, Partner, Bird & Bird

This presentation will cover sustainability of space activities and cooperation with industry; sustainable access to space and space in orbit operations and the technological innovation of the space tug; sustainable operation in space in relation to large constellations: industry's role to support regulation and implement risk mitigation solutions; compliance with national laws and authorizations.

A Fragmenting Regime? Prospects for the Future of Outer Space Governance

Ms. Jessica West, Program Officer, Project Ploughshares

The Outer Space Treaty has been critical to the maintenance of outer space as a safe and secure operating environment. Not only does its aspirational language emphasize peaceful purposes, cooperation, and universal benefit, but it has a clear operational focus on restraining harmful behaviours, including the deployment of weapons of mass destruction, colonial competition, and environmental damage. However, fourteen years of analysis by the Space Security Index indicate that both the Treaty's aspirations and constraints are threatened by shifting geopolitical tensions, emerging technological capabilities, and new activities in space. A review of key sources of stress to outer space governance and efforts (or lack thereof) to address them suggest that it is at risk of fragmenting, reinforcing the need for renewed international leadership and accountability for the long-term security and sustainability of outer space.
