

New Zealand Statement

Agenda Item 15: General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources

Sixty-First Session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS

28 March – 8 April 2022

Check Against Delivery

Chair,

The utilisation of space resources is an important enabler in meeting the objectives of internationally coordinated space exploration efforts. Space exploration deepens our scientific understanding and drives innovation and economic growth across the global space sector.

While there is no dedicated treaty governing the utilisation of space resources, the exploration, extraction and utilisation of space resources must be carried out in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty and general international law. The Outer Space Treaty provides a number of high-level rules that would apply to space resource utilisation, including the prohibition on national appropriation of outer space, the requirement that the exploration and use of outer space be carried out for the benefit of all countries, and requirements that Parties avoid the harmful contamination of outer space and harmful interference with the activities of other space actors.

While these rules guide the utilisation of space resources, New Zealand views them as insufficient to manage this activity in the long-term. Existing rules do not make explicit any requirements related to the conservation and long-term management of space resources. We believe that multilateral rules, norms or standards for space resource utilisation are needed to reinforce the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space.

We are pleased with the progress being made in the Working Group on Space Resources, and we would like to thank the Chair and Vice-Chair of the working group for their efforts.

New Zealand is committed to ensuring that space exploration activities, including the exploitation of space resources, are conducted safely and sustainably. We signed the Artemis Accords in June 2021, which provides a set of principles to guide space exploration cooperation and confirms that space resource utilisation must be carried out in accordance with international law. New Zealand sees the Artemis Accords as complementary to the work being done by this Committee, and we are pleased to see a wide distribution of signatories to the Accords from around the world. We hope that inputs from Artemis members will prove useful to the Committee in progressing this issue.

Space resource utilisation is a multilateral issue, that affects a wide range of stakeholders including states, scientific researchers, commercial actors, and civil society. New Zealand is committed to collaborating with stakeholders on issues related to the utilisation of space resources, to ensure the benefits of space exploration are experienced now and into the future. We look forward to our continued engagement with states on this issue in the Working Group on Space Resources.

Thank You Chair.