

**COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL  
USES OF OUTER SPACE**

Legal Subcommittee – Sixty-first session  
Vienna, 28 March – 8 April 2022

**Canada**

**Item 4 - General Exchange of Views**

Madam Chair,

The Canadian Delegation would like to extend many thanks to Ms. Setsuko Aoki, who effectively presided over the 60th Legal Subcommittee, despite the significant obstacles posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We also wish to welcome the new Chair and extend to her our full support for the 2022-2023 term. Canada is confident that you will continue a legacy of strong leadership and we will have a very successful hybrid session this year under your guidance.

Strong leadership and temperance from members of this Legal Subcommittee will be needed now more than ever as we are forced to navigate the destabilizing effects from President Putin's unjustifiable and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Canada strongly condemns the senseless and illegal war, in which Russia is seeking to destroy the freedom of a people and to overthrow the democratically elected government of a sovereign nation. This aggression is not only a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter with widespread humanitarian consequences, it also detracts from progress being made in multilateral institutions, including COPUOS and its subcommittees. We reiterate that respect for international law is the foundation for peaceful exploration and use of outer space. To that end, Canada calls on Russia to immediately cease all hostile and provocative actions against Ukraine and withdraw all military and proxy forces from the country.

Canada also expresses its objection to the proposed establishment of a new regional centre for space science and technology education in the Russian Federation, which was referred to in UNGA resolution 76/76.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine in recent weeks, which cannot be ignored, has demonstrated that it is not 'peaceful' and that it no longer holds the respect or endorsement of its Eurasian partners. Given these unlawful actions, it cannot be business as usual, and in this regard, we strongly object to the proposed new regional centre.

Madam Chair, Distinguished delegates,

The peaceful exploration and use of outer space has expanded dramatically. This is thanks in large part to the legal framework established by the four core United Nations Treaties on outer space, which continue to serve the international community well. However, the impressive growth in the volume and

complexity of outer space activities also presents new challenges that put at risk the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and the potential benefits it can provide.

Increasing conjunctions with spacecraft, difficulty tracking debris, and the reckless testing of debris causing anti-satellite weapons are just a few examples. However, Canada is confident that this Legal Subcommittee can make considerable progress to address these problems if we focus on providing practical and technically feasible legal guidance that assists the international community to peacefully explore and utilize outer space in a sustainable manner.

In that spirit, our delegation is encouraged by several positive developments that we view as significant for strengthening outer space law and governance.

First, we fully support the future work of the recently established Working Group on space resource utilization (SRU) and are optimistic that its work plan will be adopted this session. SRU activities are essential for the future development of deep space exploration, infrastructure and space industries. Technically feasible legal guidelines and principles must be developed to ensure that these activities remain sustainable, respect international laws and agreements, and produce the greatest benefit to humanity.

Second, Canada was thrilled to see several nations sign the Artemis Accords this past year, whose membership now stands at 17. The principles contained in this instrument will not just serve as guidelines for operating on the planned Lunar Gateway but will ensure that space operations on the Moon or other celestial bodies will be conducted safely and sustainably. They can serve as a starting point for the development of new norms and behaviours that encourage humanity's peaceful exploration and use of outer space as we move beyond the Earth and its Moon.

Finally, Canada also welcomes progress made in Geneva on the creation of an Open-Ended Working Group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, that was a result of resolution 76/231, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2021. We look forward to collaborating with all states on making the OEWG a success.

Overall, Canada is convinced that the current challenges to the exploration and use of outer space require the practical implementation of existing legal frameworks governing space, supplemented with the promotion of new norms of responsible behaviour - especially those that foster transparency and trust between nations. We strongly encourage all member states to actively participate in the norm building process, as this represents a great opportunity to influence the direction of space activities and shape the foundations of potential future legal frameworks.

Thank you.