



CANEUS STATEMENT

**Sixty-first Session of the Legal Sub-Committee of the
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**
Vienna, April 4, 2022

**Agenda Item 16: “Proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered
by the Subcommittee”, by CANEUS**

“Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Space Legal Framework”

**By
Milind Pimprikar
Chairman, CANEUS**

Mr Chair,

CANEUS welcomes this opportunity to propose a new and important agenda item for the consideration by the Subcommittee, which is aimed to “Integrate Indigenous Knowledge into Space Legal Framework”.

Mr. Chair, and Distinguished Delegates,

While there is a consensus that the long-term sustainability of space activities remains at the forefront of all space governance structures, there is a lack of genuine understanding, acceptance, and involvement of stakeholders in decision-making on how traditional Indigenous knowledges are understood or approached into Space Legal Framework.

Currently, there are several fragmented efforts based on National laws such as those in New Zealand and elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the Committee has yet to address this important issue and the legalities of how near-Earth space impacts Indigenous communities and how Indigenous knowledge is crucial for space-based governance.

Mr. Chair,

One of the key advantages of integrating Indigenous knowledge into Space legal framework, is that it would provide a degree of protection and harmonization.

However, such efforts need extensive examination by the Committee to analyze the potential options, which may range from developing a binding international agreement or non-binding guidelines, or possibly unifying the basic principles embedded in existing UN legal frameworks such as those in Article 31 of UNDRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) or Article 8(j) of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity).



Mr. Chair,

I am pleased to share that CANEUS, FILAC (The Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean), and UNOOSA, have been working together on series of global initiatives to help integrate Indigenous knowledge with space science and technologies for the SDGs.

Moreover, since 2019, we have made series of presentations to UN entities and COUPOS highlighting its importance and actions needed.

For example, recently, on February 9, 2022, at the STSC Session, CANEUS made a technical presentation, “Multi-Satellite Low-Earth-Orbit Constellations: Interferences for routine space activities & Astronomical observations”, which was based on CANEUS contribution to UNOOSA’s “National research on space debris”. It further proposed creation of an International Center for protection of Earth’s ecosystems under the auspices of UN COPUOS to compliment the “Centre for Protection of Dark and Quiet Sky” by the International Astronomical Union.

Additionally, CANEUS, FILAC and UNOOSA are working on a unique and historic “Global Research and Knowledge Repository Initiative”, known as “Indigenous Knowledge Research Infrastructure” (IKRI), which will leverage the power of Earth observation and geospatial intelligence, to capture, process, analyze, and present indigenous knowledge from multiple sources.

Mr. Chair,

We are gratified with the overwhelming support IKRI has received from the global stakeholders.

Therefore, the new Agenda item that we would like to propose is by leveraging the diverse efforts worldwide through a structured approach by addressing the challenges and opportunities to integrate Indigenous Knowledge into existing space legal framework.

I will be making a detailed technical presentation to the Subcommittee on this topic on April 6th.

To conclude, we request the Subcommittee to consider this agenda item and further invite the “Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples”, Member States from COPUOS to co-lead this effort.

Thank you.

Milind Pimprikar
Chairman
CANEUS International