

New Zealand Statement

Agenda Item 10: General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources

Sixty-Second Session of the Legal Subcommittee

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

20-31 March 2023

Thank You Chair,

Society benefits from space exploration in so many ways, including through the generation of scientific knowledge, innovation and technological advancement, and economic development. New Zealand recognises the importance of space resource utilisation, or SRU, in unlocking these benefits and for enabling deeper exploration of our solar system and beyond.

To fully realise these benefits, SRU and associated activities need to be conducted in a safe, sustainable, responsible and peaceful manner, that is consistent with international law. As a launching state New Zealand is committed to ensuring that space activities from New Zealand, including the exploration, exploitation or utilisation of space resources, are carried out safely, sustainably and in accordance with international law.

Chair,

The Outer Space Treaty provides us with a set of high-level rules that apply to SRU, 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.

As with many novel space activities, the implementation of the existing international law framework for SRU presents challenges. Existing international law is not sufficient to regulate SRU activities and associated risks in the long term. While the obligations in the Outer Space Treaty and in general international law are binding, there is a need for more detailed rules to ensure the safety and sustainability of SRU activities, including protection of the space environment.

New Zealand recognises the benefits of a multilateral approach to developing a framework on SRU and we are enthusiastic about the progress being made in the Working Group on Space Resources. We would like to thank the Chair and Vice-Chair of the working group for their efforts. New Zealand is grateful for the opportunity to contribute our perspective on this important topic.

Chair,

Non-binding instruments and fora can also be useful in guiding the behaviour of States in the safe and sustainable exploration, exploitation and utilisation of space resources and in supporting the development of rules and norms. Of relevance to SRU are the Artemis Accords, which New Zealand became a signatory to in 2021. The Artemis Accords establish a set of shared principles guiding space cooperation and exploration, including SRU, grounded in the Outer Space Treaty.

New Zealand sees the Artemis Accords as being complementary to the efforts of the Working Group on Space Resources. We are heartened by the increase in signatories to the Accords, and encourage states to consider signing up to the principles contained within them.

Thank you Chair.