

Submission by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to UN COPUOS Legal Sub Committee on Space Resource Utilisation Regarding:

**Possible Areas for Member State Input/Contributions
To the
Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities**

1. As agreed by States Members of the Committee at the 61st Session of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee, States Members were invited to provide views on the following 'Possible Areas for Member State Input/Contributions'.
2. The United Kingdom wishes to convey views on the following points at this time.
3. On Point One - The type of space resources that fall within the mandate and scope of the Working Group.
 - The United Kingdom submits that the scope of resources falling within the mandate and scope of the working group should be limited to material in outer space.
 - The scope should exclude abundant nonmaterial resources such as solar energy. The scope should also exclude scarce but nonmaterial resources such as radio waves or geostationary orbit slots as these fall under the remit of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).
4. On Point Two - The type of activities that fall within the mandate and scope of the Working Group.
 - The United Kingdom notes the growing importance of Space Resource Utilization (SRU) to exploration of the Solar System and recognises the importance of international consensus on this issue to ensure that SRU is undertaken in a safe and sustainable way.
 - The United Kingdom believes the scope of the working group could extend to all issues surrounding SRU needed to ensure the safe and sustainable use of space resources.
 - It is the United Kingdom's view that the first priority of the working group should be securing international consensus on SRU for the purposes of scientific investigation and exploration in the multilateral context, before attempting to find consensus on a regime to control for-profit mining activities of/on celestial bodies. The processing of resources in space and the products produced from this processing should also fall within the scope of this working group.
5. On Point Four - The existing legal framework for space resource activities.
 - The United Kingdom asserts that the Outer Space Treaty, as settled international law, should form the basis of the working group's discussions.

- The United Kingdom asserts that Space Resource Utilisation is not expressly prohibited under the Outer Space Treaty for the purposes of scientific investigation
- The United Kingdom recognises that while there is currently no viable commercial model for the extraction of space resources and returning them to Earth for sale, States and national space agencies may still benefit from having commercial arrangements in place to support scientific investigation such as utilisation of non-governmental entities to return lunar regolith to Earth for scientific investigation. The United Kingdom agrees with this position as compatible with Article I and the use of SRU in support of science and exploration.

6. On Point Six - The benefits and challenges of development of a framework for such activities.

- The United Kingdom recognises the importance and benefit of building an international consensus with regards to space resource utilisation as a vital pillar of the safe exploration of the Solar System for all humankind.

The United Kingdom supports the mandate of this working group to establish a framework on SRU to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with international law and in a safe, sustainable, and peaceful manner.

- The UK asserts that developing legal principles and practical measures is the optimal approach to progressing the development of a framework.

The United Kingdom asserts that there is benefit from a framework that ensures SRU is carried out in a sustainable way that does not negatively impact the continuing or future use of celestial bodies for their resources, or human heritage or scientific value.

The United Kingdom asserts that there is benefit from a framework that ensures states and non-state actors that undertake SRU do so in a way that is compliant with COSPAR's Planetary Protection Policy.

- The UK believes that one of the current challenges is obtaining the information needed to develop a framework. Without understanding the types of missions being proposed by states and non-state actors, we can't move forward and share views on how our legal framework applies to the activities which will restrict future policy consensus.

7. On Point Eight - The format, agenda, topics and other details of the dedicated conference (currently) scheduled for 2024.

- The United Kingdom is supportive of the development of an international consensus on Space Resource Utilisation.