

UNISPACE
+50

Thematic Priorities





UNITED NATIONS Office for Outer Space Affairs

UNISPACE+50 in 2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE I), which was held in Vienna in 1968.

UNISPACE+50 represents a milestone opportunity to chart the future role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its subsidiary bodies and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs as unique platforms for international space cooperation and for strengthening unified efforts at all levels and among all relevant stakeholders to address the overarching long-term development concerns of humankind with concrete deliverables pertaining to space for development.

This booklet contains seven UNISPACE+50 thematic priorities, endorsed by the Committee in 2016 (A/71/20, para.296), as well as their objectives and mechanisms.

01

Global partnership in space exploration and innovation

Objectives

Raise awareness of space exploration and innovation as essential drivers for opening up new domains in space science and technology, triggering new partnerships and developing capabilities that create new opportunities for addressing global challenges. Foster dialogue with the space industry and the private sector. Promote cooperation between spacefaring nations and emerging space nations. Allow space exploration activities to become open and inclusive on a global scale. Identify governance and cooperation mechanisms to support this objective.

Mechanism

A new action team to be established to develop a plan of activities to be approved at UNISPACE+50 in 2018 and to identify a mechanism for coordinating global space exploration efforts. Action team, to be led by States members of the Committee on a voluntary basis, with the Office for Outer Space Affairs to provide substantive and secretariat support. The Office can build on successful experiences dealing with international mechanisms, for example in acting as the executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, which was established by an action team originating from UNISPACE III.

02

Legal regime of outer space and global space governance: current and future perspectives

Objectives

Promote the universality of the five United Nations treaties on outer space. Assess the state of affairs of those treaties and their relationship with other relevant international instruments, such as principles, resolutions and guidelines governing space activities. Analyze the effectiveness of the legal regime of outer space in the twenty-first century, with a view to identifying areas that may require additional regulation. Conduct an evaluation by:

(a) Developing the questionnaire of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space to encompass an assessment of the legal regime of outer space as a pillar of global space governance. The questionnaire should be used in the period leading up to 2018 to assist the Legal Subcommittee in addressing the status and scope of, and assessing and, as appropriate, addressing possible gaps in, the legal regime of outer space;

(b) Studying potential future legal and institutional initiatives intended to ensure that outer space is explored and used for peaceful purposes and that access to outer space remains open and free for the benefit of all countries, in order to ensure that international space law is a relevant part of global space governance in the twenty-first century in the light of the significant scientific developments and technical advances that have affected space activities;

(c) Studying legal mechanisms to foster an international regime of responsibility and liability to cope with present and future challenges to the safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities and the safety of space operations, perspectives of space traffic management and an enhanced exchange of information on space objects and events. Specific consideration is to be given to current practical concerns of the international community, such as in-orbit collisions and interferences. In particular, there should be an assessment of the need for enhanced registration and notification procedures and their institutional requirements under the registration and notification platform maintained by the Office for Outer Space Affairs;

(d) Identifying, by 2018, approaches and possible criteria for developing, by 2020, a guidance document to be issued by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space with essential information on the state of affairs of the legal regime governing outer space, including relevant instruments applied through national regulatory frameworks and international mechanisms for cooperation. Such a document should serve as valuable guidance for States wishing to become a party to the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

(e) Considering means to strengthen the Legal Subcommittee as the prime multilateral body with a mandate to promote the progressive development of international space law, including procedural and institutional improvements and closer cooperation with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

Mechanism

Existing Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space of the Legal Subcommittee, which should coordinate its work with the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

03

Enhanced information exchange on space objects and events

Objectives

Define and develop requirements for enhanced information exchange and notification procedures under the United Nations Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) and the future guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities specifically addressing risk-reduction notification needs. Identify cooperation mechanisms to support this objective. Encourage capacity-building and outreach activities on transparency and confidence-building measures.

Mechanism

A new agenda item to be considered for establishment by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fourth session in 2017, entitled “Enhanced information exchange on space objects and events”, with a working group under a multi-year workplan covering the period 2018-2020 that will coordinate its work with the Legal Subcommittee and the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

04

International framework for space weather services

Objectives

Strengthen the reliability of space systems and their ability to respond to the impact of adverse space weather. Develop a space weather road map for international coordination and information exchange on space weather events and their mitigation, through risk analysis and assessment of user needs. Recognize space weather as a global challenge and the need to address the vulnerability of society as a whole. Increase awareness through developed communication, capacity-building and outreach. Identify governance and cooperation mechanisms to support this objective.

Mechanism

Existing Expert Group on Space Weather of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, to be substantively supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Space weather-related activities to be implemented also through the capacity-building activities of the Office and through the role of the Office as the executive secretariat of International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems. Taking into account the existing workplan of the Expert Group (as contained in document A/AC.105/1088, para. 169).

05

Strengthened space cooperation for global health

Objectives

Improve the use of space technologies and space-based information and systems in the global health domain. Promote enhanced cooperation and sharing of information in emergencies, epidemics and early warning events, as well as on environmental parameters. Enhance capability in integrating health data in disaster management plans. Strengthen capacity-building in advancing space technologies in global health efforts. Identify governance and cooperation mechanisms to support this objective.

Mechanism

Existing Expert Group on Space and Global Health of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, to be substantively supported by the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Space and global health-related activities to be implemented also through the capacity-building activities of the Office, and taking into account the existing work plan of the Expert Group (as contained in document A/AC.105/1088, annex I, para. 7).

06

International cooperation towards low-emission and resilient societies

Objectives

Define synergies between climate change mitigation efforts, disaster risk reduction and global development and reducing emissions by replacing carbon energy with renewable energy. Develop a road map for enhanced resiliency of space-based systems and the affiliation of existing and future Earth observation, global navigation satellite system and telecommunication constellations for disaster risk reduction and climate change monitoring and mitigation. Improve integrated space applications approaches and the interoperability of space-based systems and ground/in situ systems. Provide requirements to new developers for coverage in geographical areas not sufficiently monitored or applications that need further development. Identify governance and cooperation mechanisms to support this objective.

Mechanism

The Office for Outer Space Affairs to undertake the work under this thematic priority and report regularly to the Committee and its Subcommittees on the work under this thematic priority.

07

Capacity-building for the twenty-first century

Objectives

Define new innovative and effective approaches to overall capacity-building and development needs as a fundamental pillar of global space governance. Strengthen comprehensive capacity-building and outreach activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. Develop infrastructure for cross-sectoral and integrated applications, with combined scientific, technical, legal and policy outputs. Enhance existing partnerships and forge new ones to strengthen and deliver targeted capacity-building and technical advisory activities based on needs assessments. Promote efforts to encourage science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, especially for women in developing countries.

Mechanism

The Office for Outer Space Affairs to undertake the work under this thematic priority and report regularly to the Committee and its Subcommittees on the work under this thematic priority.

UNISPACE+50 - Further information:

UNISPACE+50 thematic priorities :

“Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its fifty-ninth session”, 8-17 June 2016.

Document A/71/20, p. 47-52

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/2016/index.html>

Historical overview of UNISPACE conferences and the way ahead:

“Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and global governance of outer space activities”.

Document A/AC.105/1137

http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/oosadoc/data/documents/2016/aac.105201/aac.1051137_0.html

UNISPACE+50 Workplan:

“Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: theme of the sessions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee in 2018”.

Document A/AC.105/L.277

UNISPACE+50 Multidonor Initiative:

http://www.unoosa.org/documents/pdf/unispace/plus50/Multi-Donor_Strategic_Support.pdf

UNISPACE+50 Webpage:

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/unispaceplus50/index.html>



UNITED NATIONS Office for Outer Space Affairs

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and assisting developing countries in using space science and technology.

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