



# General Assembly

Distr.: Limited  
29 October 2015

Original: English

---

**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space**  
**Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**  
**Fifty-third session**  
Vienna, 15-26 February 2016  
Item 14 of the provisional agenda\*\*  
**Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

## **Proposal by the United States of America for an expert group on space objects and events**

### **Working paper submitted by the United States of America<sup>1</sup>**

1. The United States of America is pleased to submit a proposal for consideration by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
2. The United States welcomes the efforts of the Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities to prepare a revised set of draft guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/L.298). This effort largely builds upon the consensus reports of four expert groups that conducted detailed examinations of specific technical issues during a series of formal and informal meetings held between October 2011 and June 2014.
3. In addition to contributing to a set of guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, the United States believes the extensive work of the four expert groups of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities can serve as a foundation to promote increased communication, coordination and capacity-building to enhance the safety of space operations.

---

\* Reissued for technical reasons on 16 February 2016.

\*\* A/AC.105/C.1/L.336.

<sup>1</sup> The present document is a revised version of a working paper first made available, in English, as a conference room paper at the fifty-eighth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.17).



4. It should be noted that the establishment of a Space Weather Expert Group was recommended by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-first session and was endorsed by the Committee at its fifty-seventh session. This expert group draws on the conclusions and recommendations of expert group C on space weather of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Canada serves as the rapporteur. The mandate of the Space Weather Expert Group — as endorsed by the Committee at its fifty-eighth session — is to promote awareness, provide guidance and enable communication and cooperation in space weather-related activities among States members of the Committee and related national and international organizations.
5. The United States believes that a second expert group should be established with a rapporteur under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The objective of this expert group would be to identify and assess relevant international practices and procedures which allow for collaborative exchanges of space object and event monitoring information, to limit the probability of, and facilitate effective responses to, accidental collisions and break-ups or other accidental events in Earth orbit that might damage spacecraft, leading to loss of mission, or loss of life in the case of crewed spacecraft. The work of this group would help promote awareness while giving the group's members the ability to propose recommendations on these topics, for consideration by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.
6. This Scientific and Technical Subcommittee expert group could identify and address issues associated with ensuring the consistency and reliability of information exchanges relating to international cooperation in the monitoring of objects and accidental events in Earth orbit. The work could, as a starting point, build upon the consensus recommendations of expert group B on space debris, space operations and tools to support collaborative space situational awareness, of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (see A/AC.105/2014/CRP.14). The new expert group could also identify and address issues associated with the sharing of relevant information and analyses on space objects and accidental events in Earth orbit, as well as the associated interpretation of information required to support the safety of space operations.
7. International cooperation in the monitoring of space objects and accidental events will increasingly involve the sharing of information provided by a range of governmental and private sector entities. Therefore, the expert group should give the fullest consideration to inputs provided by non-governmental organizations and other private sector actors, as well as inputs provided by States members of the Committee and international intergovernmental organizations. Membership in expert groups would be open to governmental and non-governmental experts from States members and international intergovernmental organizations, with contributions of individual experts coordinated through designated national points of contact.
8. The expert group should take into account, but not duplicate or reopen, discussions within the Committee and its Subcommittees on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, as well as progress made by the Space Weather Expert Group and other working groups of the Subcommittee. Efforts should also take into account, but not unnecessarily duplicate, the activities and

recommendations being undertaken in the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee on orbital debris mitigation.

9. The rapporteur of the expert group would regularly inform the Legal Subcommittee regarding the status of its efforts.

10. As with the Space Weather Expert Group, this group could conduct its efforts within existing resources, with no Secretariat services required. However, the Office of Outer Space Affairs should be substantively involved with the expert group.

---