

7 February 2022

English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-ninth session
Vienna, 7–18 February 2022
Item 13 of the provisional agenda¹
Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

Draft terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

Conference room paper by the Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its sixty-fourth session in 2021, noted that the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities had agreed that it would hold an intersessional meeting on 3 and 4 February 2022 to further advance agreement on its terms of reference, methods of work and workplan (A/76/20, para. 124). The present paper reflects progress made during the intersessional meeting held on 3 and 4 February.

Terms of reference, methods of work and workplan of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-second session, in 2019, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space adopted the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/74/20, annex II). The Committee encouraged States and international intergovernmental organizations to voluntarily take measures for the implementation of the guidelines to the greatest extent feasible and practicable (A/74/20, para. 163) [, in accordance with their respective needs, conditions and capabilities (A/74/20, annex II, para. 16)].
2. The Committee noted that it should serve as the principal forum for continued institutionalized dialogue on issues related to the implementation and review of the guidelines (A/74/20, para. 164).
3. At the same session, the Committee decided to establish, under a five-year workplan, a working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of

¹ A/AC.105/C.1/L.392.



outer space activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee ([A/74/20](#), para. 165).

4. The Committee also decided that the working group would agree on its own terms of reference, methods of work and dedicated workplan, and that the working group would be guided by the following framework:

(a) Identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. This could be done by taking into consideration existing documents including, inter alia, documents [A/AC.105/C.1/L.367](#) and A/AC.105/2019/CRP.16;

(b) Sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary [and not legally binding ([A/74/20](#), annex II, para. 15)] national implementation of the adopted guidelines;

(c) Raising awareness and building capacity [and transferring technology], in particular among emerging space nations and developing countries ([A/74/20](#), para. 167).

5. At its fifty-eighth session, in 2021, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee elected Umamaheswaran R. (India) as Chair of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and convened the Working Group ([A/AC.105/1240](#), para. 195).

II. Terms of reference

6. The Working Group will be guided by the framework defined in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on its sixty-second session ([A/74/20](#), para. 167), which comprises the following:

(a) Identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. This could be done by taking into consideration existing documents including, inter alia, documents [A/AC.105/C.1/L.367](#) and A/AC.105/2019/CRP.16;

(b) Sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary national implementation of the adopted guidelines;

(c) Raising awareness and building capacity, in particular among emerging space nations and developing countries.

7. The Working Group will attach equal importance to each of the three elements of the guiding framework set out in the paragraph above.

8. [The Working Group will adopt as its legal framework the existing United Nations treaties and principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space.]

9. The Working Group will produce a thorough report on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, containing the following:

(a) Information on the identification and study of challenges, and corresponding recommendations, as well as possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(b) Information on experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary implementation of the adopted Guidelines and recommendations for their further practical implementation;

(c) Information on and recommendations for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including those related to improving international cooperation in capacity-building, taking into particular consideration the requirements of emerging space nations and developing countries;

(d) Recommendations on future activities and work.

III. Method of work

10. The Working Group, led by the Chair and assisted by the Secretariat, is to be guided in its work by the rules of procedure, methods of work and established practices of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Working Group makes decisions by consensus and reports to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The Working Group will meet during the annual sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, with the benefit of interpretation services, and may request that time be granted to meet during the sessions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

11. The Working Group may request the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to coordinate with the Legal Subcommittee on legal questions.

12. The Working Group may decide, on an exceptional basis, to meet intersessionally to advance its work. The scheduling of any such meetings will be agreed by the member States in advance at the formal sessions and may include opportunities to participate virtually, if possible, so as to encourage maximum participation.

13. The Working Group will structure its discussions in a sequential, non-simultaneous and balanced manner under the leadership of the Chair, giving equal importance and an equitable amount of time to each of the three elements of the guiding framework.

14. The Working Group will invite contributions from States members of the Committee for further discussion at its meetings.

15. The Chair of the Working Group, with the support to the Secretariat, will establish and maintain a list of points of contact for each member State and permanent observer to facilitate faster and more effective dissemination of information, in addition to continuing to use formal means of communication.

16. The Working Group will be open to all members States of the Committee. International intergovernmental organisations holding permanent observer status will participate in accordance with the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions. As the Working Group is intergovernmental in nature, it may decide, in accordance with the established practices of the Committee, to invite contributions of information from international organizations and non-governmental entities, including from academia, industry and the private sector, and these will be coordinated through the identified national point of contact. To this end, workshops may be held during sessions and/or intersessional periods.

17. The formal documents of the Working Group will be made available in all of the official languages of the United Nations.

IV. Multi-year workplan

The five-year workplan of the Working Group for the period 2022–2026 is as follows:

2022

Adoption of the terms of reference, methods of work and dedicated workplan for the Working Group.

Identify points of contact for each member State and for permanent observers.

The Chair, in consultation with the Working Group, to invite States members of the Committee, organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee, and relevant United Nations entities, subject to the relevant provisions of paragraphs 15 and 16 above, to provide information and views on the items in paragraphs 4 and 6 above, by requesting inputs in a format deemed appropriate.

2023

Information and views to continue to be submitted, as in 2022.

The Chair and the Secretariat to compile information received and the Working Group to start consultations and exchanges thereon, with the goal of developing recommendations as outlined in paras. 4, 6 and 9.

An agenda to be developed for the workshop to be held in 2024.

2024

The Chair to present an updated draft compilation of the information and views received for the sixty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

The Working Group to start developing recommendations and to continue consultations and exchanges, as outlined in paras. 4, 6 and 9.

A workshop is to be held, within existing resources, on the margins of the sixty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, with the agenda to be defined in 2023, on the topics in paras. 4 and 6 above, with inputs from national governmental organizations, international intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia.

A report of the workshop is to be prepared by the Chair with the support of the Secretariat.

[Additional technical workshops/meetings may be planned, as appropriate, under the multi-year workplan.] [The Regional Centres on Space Science and Technology Education, affiliated to the United Nations, could assist with convening technical meetings.]

The Chair to draft a report, as outlined in para. 9, taking into account the results of consultations within the Working Group and the workshop held in 2024, for consideration[.] [at the [sixty-second session, in 2025,] [sixty-first session, in 2024,] of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.]

2025

The Chair to [refine][provide][present] a draft report for consideration by the Working Group at the sixty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as outlined in para. 9, taking into consideration the results of the consultations of the Working Group and the workshop.

[The Working Group will review and discuss findings contained in the draft report, consolidate any additional information and views provided, and continue the development of recommendations and possible new guidelines, with a view to have them consolidated into the draft final report of the Working Group.]

[The Chair will refine the findings on implementation using additional information and views provided.]

[Using the report as the foundation for discussion, the Working Group will further consider the items outlined in para. 4 and 6.]

[A revised version of the draft report will be prepared for consideration at/presentation to the sixty-eighth session of the Committee.]

2026

A final draft report of the Working Group to be presented to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its sixty-third session, to include the following:

- (a) Information on the identification and study of challenges, and corresponding recommendations, as well as possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(b) Information on experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary implementation of the adopted Guidelines and recommendations for their further practical implementation;

(c) Information on and recommendations for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including those related to improving international cooperation in capacity-building, taking into particular consideration the requirements of emerging space nations and developing countries;

(d) Recommendations on future activities and work.
