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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space  
Legal Subcommittee  
Sixty-third session  
Vienna, 15–26 April 2024  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda\***  
**General exchange of views on potential legal models  
for activities in the exploration, exploitation and  
utilization of space resources**

**Republic of Korea – Input to the Working Group on Legal  
Aspects of Space Resource Activities**

The present conference room paper was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from the Republic of Korea. The information was reproduced in the form it was received.

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\* [A/AC.105/C.2/L.326](#).



## **Republic of Korea – Response to the invitation to provide information on the mandate and purpose of the Working on Legal Aspects of Space Resources Activities**

1. The Republic of Korea welcomes the commencement of the activities of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resources at the 62nd session of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee in 2023. We attach great importance to the work of this Working Group and thank the Chair and the Vice-Chair for their invitation to provide views on the mandate and purpose of the Working Group.

2. According to the 4th Space Development Promotion Basic Plan, the Republic of Korea intends to participate in the exploration of the Moon, Mars, and other celestial bodies and to engage in space resource activities. The Republic of Korea currently operates a lunar orbiter – the Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter (KPLLO) – and some of the payloads on board provide scientific data that could contribute to future space resource activities. The Republic of Korea is also planning a lunar lander mission that may include space resources-related activities.

3. As a State member of COPUOS, the Republic of Korea is committed to working within this Working Group to develop a set of initial recommended principles for the activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources to ensure that they are conducted in accordance with international law and in a safe, sustainable, rational and peaceful manner.

4. The Republic of Korea hereby makes the following submissions in response to the invitation by the Chair and Vice-Chair to provide input on the mandate and purpose of the Working Group. The initial views expressed herein may be further elaborated in the course of the discussions of this Working Group.

### **I. The type of space resources that fall within the mandate and scope of the Working Group**

5. The Republic of Korea is of the view that the types of resources that should be considered by this Working Group are the natural resources of celestial bodies that are in the form of physical substance. In our view, this includes resources such as water and minerals.

### **II. The type of activities that fall within the mandate and scope of the Working Group**

6. The Republic of Korea is of the view that all space activities related to the exploration, exploitation, and utilization of space resources should fall within the mandate and scope of this Working Group. The specific focus of the type of space resource activities to be considered by the Working Group may be determined, as appropriate, in the course of the Working Group's discussions.

### **III. The type of information to be collected by the Working Group in accordance with its mandate**

7. The Republic of Korea suggests that the Working Group collect information on space resource activities that are currently being planned or under consideration in order to understand how space resources activities may develop in the future. The Working Group could encourage States members to share information on their national plans and programmes, as well as planned missions related to space resources to be carried out by governmental and non-governmental entities under their jurisdiction. This should include basic information on the nature, scope, and timing of the planned missions, and may include further details to the extent possible and practical.

8. The Republic of Korea also proposes that the Working Group collect information on scientific evidence and technical analysis that can inform the work of this Working Group. This is to ensure that the legal discussions held in this Working

Group are well grounded in the scientific and technological realities of space resources activities. Such information may also be useful in establishing operational rules, standards and coordination mechanisms for safe and sustainable space exploration and space resources activities. The working group could invite States members with relevant expertise to share such knowledge.

9. The Republic of Korea further proposes that the Working Group collect information on relevant international governance models and practices in the space and other sectors, emerging practices on legal and policy aspects of space resource activities, initiatives and mechanisms implemented or proposed by governments and non-governmental organizations for safe and sustainable space resource activities.

#### **IV. The views of stakeholders regarding the existing legal framework for space resource activities**

10. The Republic of Korea is a party to the four main United Nations space treaties: The Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue and Return Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention. In May 2021, the Republic of Korea signed the Artemis Accords as a political commitment to establish a practical set of principles, guidelines, and best practices to enhance the governance of civil exploration and use of outer space.

11. The Republic of Korea is of the view that there is currently no international consensus on space resource activities under the existing international legal framework and that further discussion is needed for universally accepted international legal norms. The Outer Space Treaty should form the basis of such discussions as it does establish the basic legal rights and obligations applicable to all space activities.

#### **V. The current practices and challenges in the implementation of the existing legal framework**

12. The Republic of Korea is of the view that there is some uncertainty regarding the interpretation of the existing provisions of the United Nations treaties on outer space applicable to space resource activities. This poses challenges to the implementation of the existing legal framework with respect to space resources activities.

#### **VI. The benefits and challenges to the development of a set of initial recommended principles**

13. The Republic of Korea believes that the development of an initial set of recommended principles could contribute to a better understanding and clarification of how the existing international legal framework applies to the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources. This would help to ensure the consistency of legal practice governing space resource activities in different States.

14. The Republic of Korea is of the view that one of the main challenges in developing a set of initial recommended principles is that the space resources activities and the development of related technologies are still at an early stage.

#### **VII. The relevant factors for the development of a set of initial recommended principles**

15. The Republic of Korea believes that, in developing the initial set of recommended principles, this Working Group should consider not only legal aspects, but also scientific evidence and technical analysis currently available on the subject of exploration, exploitation and use of space resources, as well as input from a multidisciplinary group of experts with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

**VIII. The format, agenda, topics and other details of the dedicated conference scheduled for 2024**

16. The Republic of Korea agrees with the format, agenda, topics and other details of the dedicated conference as agreed at the 62nd session of COPUOS in 2022, which will consist of the Expert Meeting Collecting Preliminary Inputs for Consideration at the International Conference in Vienna to be held in March 2024, and the International Conference on Space Resources to be held at the 63rd session of COPUOS in April 2024. We would like to thank the Chair, Vice-Chair and UNOOSA for organizing these events. We would also like to thank Luxembourg and Belgium for hosting the Expert Meeting and other States members for providing additional support. The input received from the international experts would be valuable to the work of this Working Group.