



General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
7 May 2012

Original: English

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fiftieth session
Vienna, 11-22 February 2013
Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Workplan of expert group D: regulatory regimes and guidance for actors in the space arena

Working paper submitted by expert group D

I. Introduction

1. At the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities agreed that the expert groups established by the Working Group should prepare draft working documents on the basis of their work, and that those working documents should be made available, in the six official languages of the United Nations, for comments by member States and permanent observers to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, preferably on the margins of and/or during the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions of the Committee (A/AC.105/1001, annex IV, paras. 16 and 17).

II. Objective and outputs

2. Space systems and their applications form an indispensable part of the world's modern infrastructure. The space environment is being used by an increasing number of States, non-governmental organizations and private sector entities. The proliferation of space debris and the increased possibility of collisions and interference with the operation of space objects raise concerns about the long-term sustainability of space activities. This is a matter of interest and importance not only for current and aspiring participants in space activities but also for the international community as a whole. Expert group D was established by the Working Group in 2011 to focus on the link between orderly, safe and predictable conduct by space



actors and space sustainability and on the provision of guidance for space actors to promote such conduct. The expert group held informal coordination meetings on the margins of the 62nd International Astronautical Congress, held in Cape Town, South Africa, in October 2011, and its first formal meetings on the margins of the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in February 2012.

3. The main objective of the expert group is to consider current practices, procedures, regulatory frameworks, principles, technical standards and associated policies; to examine those measures; and to develop best-practice guidelines that could assist States (particularly developing States) and private sector actors carrying out space activities in order to enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space.

III. Method of work

4. The expert group will invite contributions from States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, United Nations intergovernmental bodies, relevant intergovernmental organizations and other international organizations and bodies, as listed in section V of the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group (A/66/20, annex II), as well as from national non-governmental organizations and private sector actors through relevant States members of the Committee.

5. Consistent with the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group, the expert group will hold meetings on the margins of and/or during the annual sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Committee, as agreed in advance, in addition to intersessional coordination events such as meetings, teleconferences, electronic meetings and workshops. The co-chairs of the expert group will coordinate closely with the chairs of other expert groups as well as with the Chair of the Working Group in order to identify cross-cutting issues.

IV. Preliminary outline of areas of work

6. Topics for consideration by the expert group will include:

(a) Identification of the ways in which regulation affects the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and identification of the areas where regulation is most critical to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(b) Collection and sharing of existing regulatory frameworks, principles, procedures and measures that support the normative process, in order to enhance the long-term sustainability of space activities. Reference should be made to interconnections between State regulatory frameworks, principles and procedures and existing United Nations treaties and principles on outer space;

(c) Examination of frameworks, principles, procedures and measures to identify best practice models that enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, with a view to offering those models as potential guidance for States and private operators carrying out outer space activities. The examination should include practices for all phases of a mission's life cycle and for all classes of space objects, including microsatellites and smaller satellites, as they affect the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(d) Consultation with other expert groups, as appropriate, on standards, practices and guidelines related to enhancing the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;

(e) Recommendations and priority areas:

(i) Development of recommendations on ways to enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities based on the results of the work undertaken under items (a), (b), (c) and (d) above;

(ii) Identification of priority areas where future regulatory developments could enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

7. Additional topics may be considered by the expert group in response to contributions of States members of the Committee (including inputs of national non-governmental organizations and private sector entities), United Nations intergovernmental bodies, relevant intergovernmental organizations and other international organizations and bodies.

V. Preliminary schedule of work

8. The expert group intends to carry out its work in accordance with the following indicative workplan:

2012 Review of information provided by States, intergovernmental organizations and other entities as inputs to its work. Agreement on the prioritization of regulatory areas of focus and agreement on the outline for the expert group report. Begin producing inputs for the expert group report, and review initial inputs at the meeting of the Committee in June. Continue reviewing inputs during an informal coordination meeting held on the margins of the 63rd International Astronautical Congress, in October 2012, in Naples, Italy. Conduct consultations on cross-cutting issues with other expert groups, as appropriate. Continue development of draft inputs for the expert group report.

2013 Review draft inputs for the expert group report and other information provided by States, intergovernmental organizations and other entities under the auspices of the second workshop on long-term sustainability, organized in conjunction with the fiftieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Preparation, review and agreement on the expert group report in February, and submission of the report to the Working Group in June 2013. Development of best-practice guidelines and summary conclusions, to be agreed on by the expert group in June 2013.

2014 Additional work as required to support preparation of the report of the Working Group, to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.