



# General Assembly

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## **Committee on the Peaceful**

### **Uses of Outer Space**

Legal Subcommittee

Forty-first session

Vienna, 2-12 April 2002

Agenda item 10

**Proposals to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of  
Outer Space for new items to be considered by the Legal  
Subcommittee at its forty-second session**

**Proposal to recommend that the Legal Subcommittee at its  
forty-second session review the issue of the appropriateness  
and desirability of drafting a universal comprehensive  
convention on international space law as a sub-item of the  
item of its agenda entitled “Status and application of the five  
United Nations treaties on outer space”**

### **Working paper submitted by China, Greece and the Russian Federation**

1. In recent years, the international community has been witnessing the intensive development of human activities in the area of exploration and uses of outer space. While in the first decades of space exploration, hardly a dozen States exercised space activities of their own, today the “space club” includes dozens of States carrying out either independent or cooperative space programmes, which have an impact on all aspects of life in almost every State. In addition to States, private companies and other non-governmental entities have also become serious actors in that field.

2. This phenomenon has been coupled with a true technological revolution in the branches of the economy involved in space activities. New technologies have appeared that have reduced significantly the costs of space equipment, thus making it available to a larger number of consumers. At the same time, these technological novelties have led to new types of spacecraft and space systems (such as new launching systems, aerospace objects and microsatellites, to name just a few) that have transformed dramatically the ways and methods of space activities and applications.



3. All these developments need to be adequately addressed in the international space law system, which obviously has lacunae. At the same time, certain provisions of the existing basic space treaties should be adapted or modified to take into account current realities.
  4. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, with its Legal Subcommittee, is the only international body mandated to study and report on the legal problems which may arise from the exploration and use of outer space (General Assembly resolution 1721 A (XVI)).
  5. At the thirty-ninth session of the Legal Subcommittee, in 2000, the Russian Federation put forward an initiative to discuss the question of development of a United Nations comprehensive convention on the law of outer space, by analogy with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (A/AC.105/C.2/L.220).
  6. That proposal was further developed by the Russian Federation in a working document (A/AC.105/L.225 and Corr.1) presented to Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-third session, in 2000.
  7. The delegations of Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Greece and the Islamic Republic of Iran joined the initiative of the Russian Federation and proposed to include in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee a new item entitled "Discussion of the appropriateness and desirability of drafting a universal comprehensive convention on international space law" (A/AC.105/L.228 and Add.1 and 2).
  8. To further promote the initiative, China, Colombia and the Russian Federation presented to the Legal Subcommittee at its fortieth session, in 2001, a new working paper on that issue (A/AC.105/C.2/L.226) with a request to convene during the session an ad hoc informal open-ended working group to examine the initiative in detail.
  9. The delegations of China, Greece and the Russian Federation request the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to recommend that the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-second session review the issue of the appropriateness and desirability of drafting a universal comprehensive convention on international space law as a sub-item of the agenda item entitled "Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space".
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