



Core Principles for Space Resource Activities

Submission by the Outer Space Institute to the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

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1. Introduction

The Outer Space Institute (OSI) is a global network of experts united in their commitment to highly innovative, transdisciplinary research that addresses grand challenges facing the use and exploration of space.

This short paper seeks to assist the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities in identifying existing core principles for space resource activities.

The paper does not analyse these core principles. Nor does it provide a comprehensive overview of all of the rules and principles that may potentially be relevant to space resource activities. It simply collates existing core principles from (1) the UN space treaties, (2) those principles widely identified in states members' submissions to the Working Group, and (3) those principles widely identified in the interventions of state representatives at the UN Conference on Sustainable Lunar Activities held on 18 June 2024.

The paper does not address the question of whether the prohibition on national appropriation extends (or not) to commercial space mining. In our assessment, it is not necessary to answer that question to agree that all the core principles identified in this document apply.

2. Core Principles

Peaceful purposes	All space activities should be carried out peacefully.
Prohibition of national appropriation	Outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.
Adherence to international law	All space activities must be carried out in adherence with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Application of rules	In space as on Earth, rules must be applied predictably, consistently, universally, and transparently.
Common interest	All space activities must be conducted for the benefit of humanity.
Non-discrimination	All space activities must be free of discrimination of any kind.
Freedom of exploration	All space actors are free to explore outer space irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.
Freedom of scientific investigation	All space actors are free to engage in scientific investigation in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies.
Sharing of scientific results	The results of scientific investigations should be made freely available to the greatest extent feasible and practicable, regardless of the actors who conducted the investigations.
Cooperation	All space actors must cooperate with and provide assistance to each other.
Scientific cooperation	Scientific cooperation must be encouraged and facilitated.
Avoidance of harmful contamination	All space actors must avoid harmful contamination of the environment, including on Earth and in space.
Due regard	All space actors must act with due regard to the corresponding interests of other actors in the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies.
Consultation	All space actors must engage in appropriate international consultations before proceeding with any activity that would cause potential harmful interference with other actors.
Request for consultation	Any space actor may request consultations should it believe that the activities of one actor would cause harmful interference with the activities of another actor.
Peaceful resolution of disputes	Any disputes must be resolved by peaceful means.
No military installations	Military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapon, and the conduct of military manoeuvres are prohibited on celestial bodies, including the Moon.
No nuclear weapons	The placement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space is prohibited.
State responsibility	States are internationally responsible for national activities in outer space, irrespective whether such activities are carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities.
Non-governmental entities	States must authorize and continually supervise the activities of non-governmental entities.
Duty to rescue	All states have a duty to rescue distressed people regardless of their location.

3. Contributors

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