

# Background of the LTS effort in the United Nations

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# The beginning

1. At its forty-ninth session in 2006, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was presented with a working paper entitled “Future role and activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space” (A/AC.105/L.265), prepared by the Secretariat. This working paper was prepared in response to a request by the Committee at its forty-eighth session in 2005, when discussions on the future role and direction of the Committee were spurred by an informal paper on planning for future roles and activities of the Committee, prepared by the Chair of the Committee for the period 2004-2005, Adigun Ade Abiodun (Nigeria), and by a special presentation made by Karl Doetsch (Canada), Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the period 2001-2003 (A/60/20, paras. 316 and 317).

2. The Committee agreed to continue considering the issue at its fiftieth session, and further agreed that the Chair of the Committee for the period 2006-2007, Gerard Brachet (France), would conduct intersessional, open-ended informal consultations with a view to presenting a list of elements that could be taken into consideration in its future work (A/61/20, para. 297).

# The beginning...

3. In 2007, a working paper by the Chair of the Committee (A/AC.105/L.268, in particular paras. 26-29) was presented at the fiftieth session of the Committee, identifying the long-term sustainability of outer space activities among the issues facing the future peaceful uses of outer space. It suggested that a working group could be set up within the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to develop recommendations to deal with the new realities of space operations and to suggest a way forward.
4. In 2008, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Committee discussed the idea of introducing the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as an agenda item of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and what such an agenda item could encompass. Subsequently, in 2009, at the forty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, a proposal was put forward by France to include the long-term sustainability of outer space activities as a new agenda item of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee under a multi-year workplan (A/AC.105/C.1/2009/CRP.14). The Working Group of the Whole agreed to submit the proposal for a decision by the Committee (A/AC.105/933, para. 170 and annex I, paras. 20-22).

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A/AC.105/933



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**Committee on the Peaceful  
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**Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
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20 February 2009**

20. The Working Group of the Whole recognized the importance of the topic of “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities”, which was proposed by France for inclusion as a new item in the agenda of the Subcommittee, beginning with its forty-seventh session, in 2010.

21. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that the proposal made by France for an agenda item would be submitted for a decision by the Committee at its fifty-second session, in 2009, pending the results of informal consultations among all member States.

22. The Working Group of the Whole noted that the proposal by France included a three-year workplan as follows:

- 2010 Establish a working group to discuss present and future challenges of space operations and to examine measures that could potentially enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The working group would consider the results of informal consultations as a basis for its discussion and subsequent development of recommendations for the Subcommittee;
- 2011 Continue to exchange views within the working group and receive reports from member States and interested private-sector entities involved in outer space activities regarding potential measures to enhance the long-term sustainability of such activities. Start preparing a document entitled “Best practices for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities”, based on the work conducted in 2010 and 2011;
- 2012 Finalize the document entitled “Best practices for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities”, to be presented to the Committee.



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**Report of the Committee  
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**10. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**

161. The Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should include, starting from its forty-seventh session, a new agenda item entitled “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities” under the multi-year workplan as presented below:

- 2010 General exchange of views on present and future challenges facing outer space activities, as well as potential measures that could enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, with a view to establishing a working group open to all member States of the Committee.
- 2011 Preparation of a report on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and examination of measures that could enhance their long-term sustainability; preparation of a draft set of best practices guidelines.
- 2012/2013 Continuation of consideration and finalization of the report and of the set of best practices guidelines for presentation to and review by the Committee.

162. The Committee also agreed that it would consider whether the set of best practices guidelines should require review by the Legal Subcommittee before endorsement by the Committee. Once the set of best practices guidelines has been endorsed, the Committee may also consider whether it should be annexed to a specific General Assembly resolution or should be endorsed by the General Assembly as part of its annual resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

**End Game**

# STSC 2010

## **XII. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

177. The Subcommittee had before it the following:

(a) A working paper submitted by France on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.303);

(b) A conference room paper on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities: preliminary reflections (A/AC.105/C.1/2010/CRP.3).

181. At its 735th meeting, on 18 February 2010, the Subcommittee established the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

182. At its 737th meeting, on 19 February 2010, the Subcommittee elected Peter Martinez (South Africa) Chair of the Working Group.

183. The Subcommittee recommended to the Committee that, taking into account the importance of the item, the Working Group be allowed to hold one meeting during the fifty-third session of the Committee, in June 2010, with interpretation services into the six languages of the United Nations, with a view to further developing its terms of reference and a method of work.





**United Nations**

**Report of the Committee  
on the Peaceful Uses of  
Outer Space**

**Fifty-third session  
(9-18 June 2010)**

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## 10. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

152. The Committee welcomed the establishment by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa) and endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that the Working Group be allowed to meet during the current session of the Committee to further develop its terms of reference and methods of work.

153. The Committee noted with appreciation that a proposal for the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group, as contained in document A/AC.105/L.277, had been submitted by the Chair of the Working Group for consideration by the Working Group.

156. The Committee agreed to invite member States to submit their views and comments on the forthcoming revision to A/AC.105/L.277, with specific emphasis on terms of reference, thematic areas, methods of work and workplan.

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Vienna, 1-10 June 2011

**Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
on its forty-eighth session, held in Vienna  
from 7 to 18 February 2011**

## **XI. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

178. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/97, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee considered agenda item 13, “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities”, under the workplan contained in the report of the Committee at its fifty-second session.<sup>4</sup>

182. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/97, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was reconvened under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa). The Working Group held four meetings.

189. At its 756th meeting, on 18 February 2011, the Subcommittee endorsed the report of the Working Group, contained in annex IV to the present report.

### **XIII. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**

- (d) Long-term sustainability of outer space activities.

(Work for 2011 as reflected in the multi-year workplan in paragraph 161 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on its fifty-second session,<sup>4</sup> subject to any decision to be made during the fifty-fourth session of the Committee, in 2011)

## **Annex IV**

### **Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities**

2. The Working Group had before it the following documents:

(a) Working paper submitted by the Chair of the Working Group on the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/C.1/L.307);

3. At the first meeting of the Working Group, on 14 February 2011, the Chair of the Working Group recalled the following process in the development of document A/AC.105/L.307 since the fifty-third session of the Committee, in 2010:

(a) In accordance with the agreement of the Committee, the Secretariat had sent to all member States of the Committee, in a note verbale dated 11 October 2010, a working paper submitted by the Chair of the Working Group containing proposed draft terms of reference and methods of work for the Working Group, intended to form the basis of A/AC.105/C.1/L.307. That working paper incorporated the comments received from member States at the fifty-third session of the Committee in response to the proposal for the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group contained in document A/AC.105/L.277 (see A/65/20, para. 155);

8. The Working Group considered a proposal contained in A/AC.105/C.1/2011/CRP.17 for the clustering of the proposed topics listed in section IV (“Scope”) of the draft terms of reference and methods of work as contained in document A/AC.105/C.1/2011/L.307, in order to allow for a more efficient consideration of closely related items. The following clusters were proposed:

- (a) Sustainable space utilization supporting sustainable development on Earth;
- (b) Space debris; space operations and tools to support collaborative space situational awareness;
- (c) Space weather;
- (d) Regulatory regimes and guidance for actors in the space arena.

9. The Working Group agreed that the proposed clustering of topics could be considered as a basis for the establishment of expert groups. The Working Group stressed that the work of the expert groups should be balanced to ensure that the proposed clusters listed in paragraph 8 above received due consideration, and that the expert groups should take advantage of work done by other entities.

10. The Working Group agreed that the expert groups should be established in the intersessional period. The Working Group therefore requested the Secretariat to invite member States of the Committee and intergovernmental organizations with permanent observer status with the Committee to nominate suitable experts to participate in the expert groups.

11. The Working Group agreed that these expert groups should be established and their chairs or co-chairs identified by the end of April 2011, with a view to reporting on the progress made to the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, in June 2011.

12. The Working Group agreed that the revised text of document A/AC.105/C.1/L.307 should be transmitted to all member States of the Committee as document A/AC.105/C.1/L.307/Rev.1, inviting member States to provide comments by the end of April 2011, with a view to adopting the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities at the fifty-fourth session of the Committee, in 2011.





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**Report of the Committee  
on the Peaceful Uses of  
Outer Space**

**Fifty-fourth session  
(1-10 June 2011)**

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Supplement No. 20**

## 10. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, contained in annex II to the present report.

150. The Committee recalled its agreement made at its fifty-second session, in 2009, that the Committee would consider whether the set of best practices guidelines should require review by the Legal Subcommittee before endorsement by the Committee and that, once the set of best practices guidelines had been endorsed, the Committee might also consider whether it should be annexed to a specific General Assembly resolution or should be endorsed by the Assembly as part of its annual resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/64/20, para. 162).

## **Annex II**

### **Terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**

#### **I. Introduction**

#### **II. Terms of reference**

#### **III. Objective and outputs**

#### **IV. Scope**

#### **V. Method of work**

## VI. Multi-year workplan **Final agreed workplan**

23. The indicative workplan under the item “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities” for the period 2011-2014 will be as follows:

- 2011 Develop terms of reference, method of work and workplan. Identify a point of contact for each State member of the Committee represented in the Working Group. Review the work done to date on this issue and prioritize future tasks. Invite States members of the Committee and, subject to the observance of relevant provisions of paragraphs 16 and 17 above, organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee and experience in space activities to provide information in 2012 on their experiences and practices that might relate to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and on how they envisage work under the topic. Establish on a provisional basis the expert groups and commence preliminary planning of their activities for 2012.
- 2012 Hold a general exchange of views among States members of the Committee and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee on the topics encompassed within the scope of work. Invite States members of the Committee to provide inputs from their national non-governmental organizations and private sector entities. Hold a workshop at which States members of the Committee and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee provide information on their experiences and practices in the conduct of sustainable space activities (presentations and discussions to be conducted in the official languages of the United Nations). Hold consultations at the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and during the intersessional period with States members of the Committee and with intergovernmental and other international organizations having experience in space activities and

# Final agreed workplan

those considering or initiating involvement in space activities to provide information on established practices and proposed measures to enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Commence consolidation of information gathered. Initiate development of a draft outline of the report to be produced by the Working Group.

- 2013 Encourage States members of the Committee to review and assess domestic practices regarding all aspects of enhancing sustainability of outer space activities. Invite States members of the Committee to include in their delegations representatives of national non-governmental organizations and of private sector entities having experience in space activities to provide information on their experiences and practices in the conduct of sustainable space activities at a workshop to be held in conjunction with the fiftieth session of the Subcommittee (presentations and discussions to be conducted in the official languages of the United Nations). Develop a draft report and an outline of the draft set of best-practice guidelines for submission to the Subcommittee in 2014.
- 2014 Consider the draft report and the draft guidelines at the Subcommittee's fifty-first session. Finalize the report and the set of best-practice guidelines for presentation to and review by the Committee. Determine whether the workplan should be extended to cover potential future work. If the workplan is not extended, discontinue the Working Group.

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**Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
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from 6 to 17 February 2012**

## **XI. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

187. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/71, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was reconvened under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa).

188. The Subcommittee welcomed the adoption of the terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities at the meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in June 2011<sup>2</sup> and noted with appreciation that expert groups of the Working Group to address specific topics had been established and had initiated their work.

210. At its 776th meeting, on 17 February, the Subcommittee endorsed the report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, which is contained in annex IV to the present report.

## **Annex IV**

### **Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities**

5. The Working Group recalled that four expert groups had been established in accordance with the terms of reference to address the following topics:

(a) Sustainable space utilization supporting sustainable development on Earth, chaired by Filipe Duarte Santos (Portugal);

(b) Space debris, space operations and tools to support collaborative space situational awareness, co-chaired by Claudio Portelli (Italy) and Richard Bueneke (United States);

(c) Space weather, chaired by Takahiro Obara (Japan);

(d) Regulatory regimes and guidance for actors in the space arena, co-chaired by Sergio Marchisio (Italy) and Anthony Wicht (Australia).

8. The Working Group noted with appreciation the workshop that had been held during its first meeting, on 9 February 2012, in accordance with its multi-year workplan. During the workshop the Working Group considered the intersessional activities of the expert groups, as well as their plans for advancing the work under their respective mandates. A brief summary of the presentations delivered by the chairs and co-chairs of the expert groups during the workshop is contained in the appendix to the present report. The full presentations were placed on the web page of the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as well as on the web page dedicated to the Working Group.



16. At its second meeting the Working Group agreed on the following:

*Meetings and decisions of the expert groups*

*Reports of the expert groups*

*Information flow from expert groups to the Working Group*

*Incorporation of expert group inputs to the Working Group*

18. The Working Group noted that the Chair of the Working Group and the chairs and co-chairs of the expert groups would hold coordination meetings on the margins of the fifty-fifth session of the Committee, in June 2012. The purpose of those meetings would be to coordinate the work of the expert groups, with emphasis on addressing gaps, identifying cross-cutting issues and avoiding duplication of efforts. The Working Group noted that some of the expert groups could decide to hold joint meetings to address certain cross-cutting issues identified in those coordination meetings.

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Vienna, 12-21 June 2013

**Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its  
fiftieth session, held in Vienna from 11 to 22 February 2013**

## **XI. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

203. A conference room paper, containing the proposed candidate guidelines of expert groups A-D of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, as presented at a joint meeting held on 15 February 2013 (A/AC.105/C.1/2013/CRP.23), was also made available to the Subcommittee during the session.

204. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/113, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities was reconvened under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa).

## **Annex IV**

### **Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities**

10. At the third meeting of the Working Group, on 18 February 2013, the Chair of the Working Group invited the Chair of the group of governmental experts on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities to present its activities to the Working Group. The presentation was given in accordance with paragraph 16 of the terms of reference and methods of work (A/66/20, annex II), which mandated the Working Group to invite contributions from States members of the Committee, as well as to invite contributions from and/or consider and decide on appropriate liaison with United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including the group of governmental experts. The presentation by the Chair of that group highlighted the complementary nature of those two processes. The Chair of the group of governmental experts also shared an outline of the draft report with the Working Group, outlining the principal elements of the work of the group of governmental experts.

## **Link with First Committee**

13. In accordance with what was agreed by the Working Group during the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/1001, annex IV, para. 16), the expert groups held a joint meeting on 15 February 2013. During that meeting, the co-chairs of the expert groups presented the current status of their work and the progress that had been made at the current session, while also highlighting some overlaps in the emerging candidate guidelines that would need to be addressed as the guidelines were consolidated into the final report of the Working Group.

## **Appendix**

**Report on the workshop organized by the Working Group on the  
Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities on  
14 February 2013**

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**Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee  
on its fifty-first session, held in Vienna from 10 to  
21 February 2014**

## **XI. Long-term sustainability of outer space activities**

191. The Subcommittee had before it the following:

(d) Working paper by the Chair of the Working Group containing a proposal for a draft report and a preliminary set of draft guidelines of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.339);

192. The Subcommittee welcomed the fact that General Assembly resolution 68/50 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) were made available at the session.

195. The Subcommittee noted that the proposal for a draft report and a preliminary set of draft guidelines, contained in the working paper prepared by the Chair of the Working Group, constituted an important step forward in the work of the Working Group and provided a solid basis for further discussions towards developing a consensus-based set of guidelines.



## **Annex III**

### **Report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities**

8. The Working Group also noted that the focus of the deliberations on the set of draft guidelines was shifting from the expert groups to the Working Group and that the Working Group would take into account the valuable inputs of the expert groups in its continued work on developing the set of draft guidelines. The Working Group further noted that the Chair would continue to consult the expert group co-chairs concerning the incorporation of the work of the expert groups into the Working Group and that the experts could continue to support their national delegations as the consideration of the draft guidelines continued in the Working Group.

14. The Working Group noted that the conference room paper, to be prepared by the Chair for the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, would serve as a basis for discussions on a draft report of the Working Group, to be developed following the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, taking into account inputs received from delegations and decisions taken by the Working Group at that session. The draft report of the Working Group would be made available to delegations in the six official languages of the United Nations before the start of the fifty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in February 2015.

17. The Working Group agreed that the findings contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) would be considered by the Working Group at the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, with a view to identifying interlinkages in the recommendations contained in that report and in the work under way in the Working Group, as well as elements that could be taken into consideration in the development of guidelines by the Working Group.

18. The Working Group noted that the Chair would request the Committee to consider, at its fifty-seventh session, an extension of the workplan of the Working Group.

19. The Working Group noted that, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its fifty-sixth session, the Chair of the Working Group would inform the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-third session of the progress achieved by the Working Group in the period leading up to and during the fifty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

20. The Working Group agreed that the Chair of the Working Group would consult with the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat regarding the scheduling of the fifty-seventh session of the Committee so as to allow the possibility for the Working Group to meet during that session, benefiting from interpretation services.

Updated draft guidelines circulated during the fifty-second session of the Subcommittee in 2015.

Thank you

