



北京航空航天大学
BEIHANG UNIVERSITY

International Legal Regime to Protect Space Environment

Dr. Li Bin

Associate Professor

Beihang University School of Law

Email : ruclb@126.com



- 1. Protection of Space Environment as a Basic Principle of International Space Law
- 2. International Legal Regime to Address Space Debris—Weaknesses
- 3. Promotion of International Legal Regime to Protect Space Environment



1. Protection of Space Environment as a Basic Principle of International Space Law

(1) Emergence of International Space Law

- Oct.4, 1957: Sputnik-1 (Soviet Union)
- 1958: UNGA/Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
- 1959:UNGA/Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
- Two Subcommittees inside COPUOS (Scientific and Technical; Legal)



- (2) Structure of International Space Law
- 1967 Outer Space Treaty (100)
- 1968 Rescue Agreement (92)
- 1972 Liability Convention (90)
- 1976 Registration Convention (55)
- 1984 Moon Agreement (13)



- (3) Article 9 (1967 Outer Space Treaty)
- In the exploration and use of outer space.....States Parties to the Treaty shall pursue studies of outer space and conduct exploration of them so as to avoid their harmful contamination and also adverse changes in the environment of the Earth resulting from the introduction of extraterrestrial matter and, where necessary, shall adopt appropriate measures for this purpose.
- To Be Continued



- (3) Article 9 (1967 Outer Space Treaty)
- If a State Party to the Treaty has reason to believe that an activity or experiment planned by it or its nationals in outer space would cause potentially harmful interference with activities of other States Parties in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it shall undertake appropriate international consultations before proceeding with any such activity or experiment.....



2. International Legal Regime to Address Space Debris—Weaknesses

- (1) Article 7 (1984 Moon Agreement)
- In exploring and using the Moon, state parties shall take measures to prevent the disruption of the existing balance of its environment, whether by introducing adverse changes in that environment, by its harmful contamination through the introduction of extra-environmental matter or otherwise, and state parties shall also work to avoid harmfully affecting the Earth's environment, either by introducing extraterrestrial matter or through other action.



- (2) 1976 Liability Convention
- Article 2 provides that a launching State shall be absolutely liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space object on the surface of the earth or to aircraft in flight,
- Article 3 reads that in the event of damage being caused elsewhere than on the surface of the Earth to a space object of one launching State or to persons or property on board such a space object by a space object of another launching State, the latter shall be liable only if the damage is due to its fault or the fault of persons for whom it is responsible.



- (3) The Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963 PTBT/113 Parties)
- 1996 CTBT: 132 Parties



- To sum up, in the current international legal regime, no treaty specially deals with space environment protection, not to speak of space debris.
- Some articles in this regard has problems so that it is very difficult to meet the needs of developing situations.



3.Promotion of International Legal Regime to Protect Space Environment

- (1) A comprehensive treaty to protect space environment is possible but it will be a very long process.
- (2) Encourage domestic legislation.



■ Thank you!