

Country: Commonwealth of Australia

Committee: United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and International Civilian Aviation Organization (UNOOSA-ICAO)

Delegate(s): Lily Gong

1. The Environment and Space Activity

Since the born of civilization, the wonders of space has led to numerous attempts of exploring the unknown area lying above. However, along with the convenience provided by satellite-related technologies, human activity in space has resulted in severe environmental pollutions. It is mainly caused by the increasing amount of black carbon in atmosphere(released during the process of launching rockets), which is one of the leading factors that are responsible for climate change.

Australia has been vulnerable to the enhancing effect of global warming since the year of 1950. Statistics show that 50% to 70% of the coral reefs in Great Barrier is at the edge of bleaching out due to the rising sea temperature. Moreover, like many other nations, Australia is deeply impacted by the emission of black carbon. Therefore, the delegation of Australia believes that a balance should be achieved between outer space development and protecting the vulnerable ecosystem on Earth. Measures such as regulating the process of rocket-launching and monitoring the amount of black carbon being released should be taken. However, this would rather be hard to put into practice if every nation work individually, since they all have their advantages and inabilities. In other words, collaboration between different nations would not only conserve the energy and resources being used, but also reduce the total amount of black carbon being released.

2.Militarization of Space and International Laws

Even after the destruction of Soviet Union, the militarization of space continues and has become a pressing issue that could potentially lead to weaponization in outer space. However, because extra-terrestrial development nowadays still remains to be at primary level, the laws regarding this issue are often unclear or undefined. Nations such as Russia and China could develop offensive technologies under the guise of developing defense systems, causing previous attempts of resolving the issue to fail as a result of their oppositions. Therefore, Australia believes that the cooperation between international communities is the key to controlling the increasing militarization in space.

As the fourth nation to be in orbit, Australia has a history of participating in outer space programs and affairs. The Outer Space Treaty states that “no nuclear weapons and weapons of destruction should be placed on any celestial objects”; however, Australia strongly suggests that it is essential to narrow down and clarify the idea of “weapons” to specific points in order to prevent confusions or exploitation on the flaws of existing laws. Similarly, Australia recognizes that it is necessary to also clarify the rights of humankind in space to maintain peace and to prevent damages or losses of lives. That is, bringing the International Humanitarian Law into space. However, the contradictions between existing laws or treaties and the IHL could result in severe conflicts and disorganization. Therefore, the delegate of Australia believes that it is essential to create a law that considers more specific categories which applies differently to the civilians and the military. When addressing the issue of imbalance in the “Space Race”, additional treaties should be used to regulate the uncontrollably growing power of certain nations, in order to maintain peace in outer space.

3. Space Commercialization

With the emerging space technologies nowadays, space commercialization begins to come into sight. Programs such as space tourism and asteroids mining are no longer elements that only appear in science fictions. Meanwhile, ensuring the order and safety of aerospace activities is critical to all international communities, since the development in outer space influences greatly on human civilization.

Australia recognizes that aerospace activities consist a series of risk factors such as outer space pollution caused by debris, which also have the potential to damage existing civilian satellites. If not resolved, debris wondering freely in outer space could be a harm to astronauts, resulting in life loss. Australia believes that both investing in aerospace under national funding and private research should be encouraged. Therefore, a system is needed for regulating outer space industries with an unified standard that applies the same with both types of organizations. The government of Australia has been always emphasizing the scientific research on satellite utilization rather than space exploration. Since space technology is still at its primary level, the national and private organizations should not invest huge amount of resources into a new frontier that lacks stability. Instead, the focus should be placed on resolving existing issues such as cleaning debris left behind by human in outer space.