

56th IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)  
Recent Developments in Space Law (5)

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## DISTILLING GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL SPACE LAW

**Abstract**

Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice lists three sources of law to apply in disputes: conventions, custom, and general principles of law. General principles of international law are derived from the body of municipal or domestic law pertinent to the issue.

The Working Group on National Legislation Relevant to the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space of the Legal Subcommittee of UN COPUOS recently submitted its working paper and schematic overview compiling the national regulatory frameworks in place for space activities as a whole. This comprehensive table illustrates the differences and similarities in how States have chosen to comply with different treaty obligations. It is a good start for distilling out the essence of general principles of international law in space.

The paper examines the role that this recent work of the Legal Subcommittee may play in identifying common principles. Further, it examines the compilation of national laws to identify those common principles and analyzes them to reveal their crux or ultimate essence. Lastly, it explores the possibility that any or all of these essential principles may be sufficiently generalized to serve as a source of law available to settle international disputes.