

58th IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
Joint IAF-IISL Session on the Legal Framework for Collaborative Space Activities (7-B3.8)

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INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL EXPLORATION AND
USE OF OUTER SPACE

Abstract

As was recognized in “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development,” issued on the occasion of Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), General Assembly resolution 51/122 states that “international cooperation should be conducted in the modes that are considered most effective and appropriate by the countries concerned, including, inter alia, governmental and non-governmental; commercial and non-commercial; global, multilateral, regional or bilateral; and international cooperation among countries in all levels of development.”

Since the first meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Space (COPUOS) over 50 years ago, Member States and international organizations have acted collectively to promote the peaceful exploration and use of outer space through a variety of mechanisms. These include the UN outer space treaties, associated non-binding principles and technical guidelines, bilateral and multilateral agreements and non-binding arrangements, informal coordination groups, and regional conferences. This paper will analyze the various mechanisms employed by States to conduct international collaboration with a view to identifying common principles and procedures. This information could be helpful to States as they choose relevant mechanisms to facilitate future cooperative endeavors.