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THE CURRENT AND FUTURE EFFORTS FOR REACHING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF
OUTER SPACE: IS IT THE TIME TO LEGALLY DEVELOP BINDING RULES RELATED TO
SPACE DEBRIS?

Abstract

Man-made space debris has become one of the most discussed issues concerning the further development of outer space activities. The accumulation of such space debris in LEO and GEO orbits has been caused by a number of factors. As a result, the world space community has realized that this problem features such a serious risk that can probably make the space exploration unfeasible for generations. A number of recent non-legally binding rules proposals for a new international agreement on space stability are presently on the table. The UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines endorsed by General Assembly and its resolution 62/217 represent the current efforts to be implemented in national policies. Likewise, the proposals for the creation of a Space Traffic Management and of an International Space Situational Awareness, as well as techniques to remove debris and Role of Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures have been achieved for long-term sustainability of the outer space. On the other hand, obstacles in accomplishing successful proposals to start the legal analysis of binding rules for this scenario have failed during the UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee sessions. No consensus having been reached yet by the space faring nations, which does not include the consideration of the substantive legal problems of space debris or a detailed analysis of the legal content of the UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. In doing so, this paper has the role of proposing recommendations for the consideration of the substantive legal problems of space debris and the legal analysis of the UN Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines in the UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee.