

35th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
Assuring a Safe, Secure and Sustainable Environment for Space Activities (4)

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SPACE LAW FOR NEW SPACE ACTORS: FOR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS AND BEYOND

Abstract

Innovation and knowledge derived from space exploration and related activities support economic growth, deliver high returns on investment, generate new technologies and create jobs. More countries and non-governmental entities than ever are investing their political and economic capital in the space environment. As such interests grows, awareness of and adherence to international space law becomes ever more important to maintain a stable, secure and safe space environment that can deliver sustainable returns on such investments. The United Nations Outer Space Treaty, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2017, is the foundation of international space law. Since the Outer Space Treaty, governments have agreed, through the United Nations, a growing list of treaties, principals and guidelines that, collectively, constitute the existing normative framework governing activities in outer space. This framework has been instrumental in ensuring that countries conduct national space activities responsibly for over half a century. Such stability has been pivotal in supporting the exponential growth in the global space sector. The existing normative framework provides fundamental rules for the conduct of outer space activities. As more entities than ever before are becoming active in the space environment awareness of - and adherence to - existing international space law becomes ever more important. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, as the UN's dedicated entity for space affairs, works on the legal, policy and capacity building aspects of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as in space science and technology. In 2019, the Office launched a project to provide targeted space law advisory services, through its legal services team, tailored to new and emerging space-faring nations. Interested parties can request targeted space law capacity-building and advisory services in space law and policy by the Office. Since its establishment UNOOSA has delivered 5 technical advisory missions to governmental officials who will be involved in developing process of the space law and policy of their countries. Such capacity-buildings facilitate the drafting of national space law and/or national space policy that is in line with the existing international space law framework. In 2021, the Office also started delivering series of lectures on national space law and policy to post graduate engineering students from emerging space faring nations, so that they familiarize themselves with the legal framework and will be able to contribute to development of national space law and policy when they complete their studies. Through this presentation, these services will be explained in detail. Furthermore, the importance of the wider adherence of space law and the study made to identify the gap and needs assessment of emerging space-faring nations will be introduced and thus underlining the importance of dedicated efforts by the Office to raise awareness and adherence levels for international space law.