

United Nations Office For Outer Space Affairs

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Office for Outer Space Affairs

Topics

Topic A: Monitoring the issues of orbital space debris

Topic B: Privatization of space and space tourism

Chair Members

President: Maximiliano Geyne Saavedra

Moderator: Jimena Cabral Corres

Conference Officer: Julieta Botella Penagos

Introduction to the chairs

- Greetings delegates, welcome to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. I am Maximiliano Geyne and I will be your president. For this year's debate we will be addressing the rising troubles regarding monitoring the issues of orbital space debris and the privatization of space and space tourism. If you have absolutely any doubt regarding anything, you can contact me via this email address: maximiliano.geyne@bab.edu.mx
- Hello delegates, my name is Jimena Cabral Corres and I will be your moderator for the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs committee. The objective of this United Nations model is achieving a logical solution that benefits all countries involved. If you need anything, feel free to contact me via this email: jimena.cabral@bab.edu.mx
- Welcome delegates, my name is Julieta Botella Penagos and I will be your conference officer in the committee of UNOOSA. It will be a pleasure to work with all of you, so if you have questions do not doubt on sending me an email to: julieta.botella@bab.edu.mx

Introduction to the committee

- The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was created as a small UN unit used to treat outer space matters peacefully, its main committee is COPUOS, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It was established on the 13th of December of 1958 by the General Assembly. Though the committee went through many changes through time, it has always maintained the same purpose: to regulate outer space affairs in order to ensure an equal and peaceful use of and in it. One of its main achievements was the Outer Space Treaty, which established the first international legal framework for peaceful space activities. As well as the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, and The Human Space Initiative, that focuses on providing access to space exploration to developing countries. The first UN space mission to send microgravity payloads into orbit, is another one of its highlights. Space law is the body of law governing space related activities they established. (2025).

It is of importance to mention that it is responsible for:

- Promoting international cooperation in outer space use and exploration, providing technology and data regarding outer space exploration to developing countries.
- Promote the avoidance of accidents and disasters and to implement major international treaties and legal principles related to outer space activity within the UN legal framework.

- Ensure that the use of space is always peaceful, and only for innovation and research means, never involved in any political interest.

Main programs and initiatives:

- Access to Space 4 All initiative: to facilitate access and knowledge about space to developing countries.
- UN-SPIDER: helps countries use technologies such as satellite imagery to prevent and manage disasters.
- Space4Youth: a worldwide initiative that recognizes young people's contributions and opinions regarding outer space.

Topic Overview

Topic A: Monitoring the issues of orbital space debris

- Space debris are pieces of junk, machinery or debris left by the human race in space. They often are big objects such as satellites that have failed or left in orbit at the end of their mission or small objects like paint or dust that fell off rockets during space missions. (O'Callaghan, J. N,d.). Regarding monitoring the space debris, the only legislation that talk about them is the Outer Space Treaty where the following mandates/laws are stated; States shall be responsible for national space activities whether carried out by governmental or non-governmental entities; States shall be liable for damage caused by their space objects; and States shall avoid harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies. (1967). Since 1967 there has not been any new law or legislation that gives importance to the monitoring of space debris. Delegates must establish regulations that respect the Outer Space Treaty, and are specific enough to treat the issue. This topic directly relates to UNOOSA, because it is the institution entitled to treat all outer space activity, guaranteeing the most important UN objective; peace. Before the 1970s, the space was clear of any types of space debris this has suffered an incredible change, just as Loretta Hall says; NASA reports that as of 2013, more than 21,000 pieces at least the size of a softball were being tracked, and an estimated 500,000 pieces at least the size of a marble are thought to exist. More than 100 million even smaller objects, ranging down to the size of a tiny fleck of paint, are too small to detect or track. (2014). Though this source may be out-dated, it still portrays the large necessity of debating and

overviewing the topic of monitoring space debris. As of 2025, there are not any regulations regarding monitoring space debris. The only official UN mandate regarding space debris is the one in the space treaty, where it is stated that all members have the responsibility of providing assistance for the monitoring space debris, and the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines, a set of voluntary recommendations, developed by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. The lack of official regulations makes this a topic worthy of debating, since the world needs a way of taking care of the space debris, yet this is also problematic, since governmental interests are also involved.

The delegations that are the most involved in the topic are the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. The USA is the nation that started with the commercialization of space, and one of the current most active countries regarding space activities. Also, their governmental agency NASA is the most public and famous space agency that exists. Russia was the first country to enter space with Sputnik 1, and is currently a very involved delegation in the topic. It is important to highlight that this nation is currently under delicate diplomatic relations. Then, China, is one of the countries who possess the largest satellite fleets in orbit, and have an interesting future with the expansion of lunar missions and rover Mars explorations. In conclusion, monitoring orbital space debris is one of the biggest challenges humanity faces in the modern space era. Even though some guidelines exist, there are still no strong international laws to control or reduce the problem. The Outer Space Treaty set the foundation, but it is now outdated for today's needs. Creating new regulations, investing in better monitoring technologies, and forming specialized committees could be effective steps to protect space for

future generations. It is essential that all nations work together under UNOOSA to guarantee the peaceful and safe use of outer space.

Topic B: Privatization of space and space tourism

- The privatization of space is the shift that outer space has experienced in the last years that consists of private companies and enterprises making use and participating in outer space activities, instead of governmental agencies. This shift has resulted in controversy. Since technologies have evolved in a larger and faster way than any governmental agency could have ever achieved. Private companies such as Space X and Blue Origin have contributed largely with new things such as the Falcon 9, a reusable rocket, the launch of Starlink satellite internet, and building a lunar landing system. Finally, private enterprises also support space tourism, to open the doors to humanity in the direction of space life. The controversy starts when the Space treaty comes into consideration, because it is stated explicitly that outer space is public, and no one owns it. Also, the lack of space regulations may be seen as a possible danger, because it opens the possibility of manipulating and using outer space for non-peaceful reasons, as well as the use of it in an irresponsible way. It is also important to mention that space activity in general generates pollution and harms the environment, and space tourism will do such with a benefit for humanity that will take decades to show its progress, and would not take much to demonstrate the environmental harm. This topic is worthy of debate because though private space has made big progressions and developments for its field, it has also damaged the atmosphere, and increased the space debris situation. There also exists a regulatory complexity and fragmentation, causing the violation of safety standards, and troubles

with licensing policies, as well as may contemplate the fact that space is for everyone. Finally, space tourism is controversial since delegations consider it an irresponsible practice that only damages the atmosphere. (2025).

Before 1970, all space topic related activity handled by a private enterprise, had to be solicited to a governmental agency. The US government with NASA, was the only provider of space launch services to the Western world. Seeing an opportunity to provide launch services, the European Space Agency developed its own ELV, Ariane, which became the first competitor to NASA for commercial launches. The first Ariane launch occurred in 1979, and in 1984, a private company, Arianespace, took over commercial operation of the vehicle. (Federal Aviation Administration, n.d). In 1982 the first successful private launch in the USA took place, with Conestoga 1. There, the Commercial Space Launch of 1984 was signed, establishing that the U.S. Department of Transportation needed to encourage outer space activity by private companies. In the 1990s, private companies started to develop their rockets and other technologies completely on their own. In 2001, Dennis Tito paid 20 million to fly with Russia to the International Space Station, this started space tourism. In 2002, Space X was founded by Elon Musk, this was a turning point for the industry, because by 2010, costs were reduced by the creation of re-usable rockets. Government agencies started relations with private enterprises. Space X being the lead. As Russia, China, India, and Japan emerged as global competitors, Europe's Arianespace continued to lead the way in commercial launches. By the 2020s, the commercial space sector had expanded to a multibillion dollar market with regular satellite launches, space travel, and cargo deliveries. In 2025, the private sector of space values more than 9.4 billion, and is currently having

one of the fastest growths in history. Space tourism is currently a practice for highly resourced individuals, impulsed mainly by Blue Origin. (2025).

The United States is the country with the largest growing private agencies, and is host for the largest and most controversial agency, Space X. Russia has always been involved in this topic, they hosted the first tourist space flight. China is working with private agencies to implement global satellite markets. The European Space Agency has a strong involvement in commercial launches and investigation, they are the ones mainly focusing on the space debris issue. India and Japan are emerging as large powers. In conclusion, the privatization of space and the rise of space tourism represents both progress and risk for humanity. Private companies have accelerated innovation, reduced costs, and opened new opportunities for exploration. However, the lack of strict international regulation has led to concerns about safety, environmental harm, and inequality in access to space. To ensure that space remains a peaceful and sustainable domain, stronger collaboration between governments, private enterprises, and international organizations like UNOOSA is essential. Only through updated treaties and responsible action can space exploration truly benefit all humankind. (2025).

Suggested Tools for Further Research, Documents of Significance, and Guiding Questions

- 1957: With the launch of Sputnik 1, starts the space age, alongside the creation of the first human made space debris.
- 1961-1979: The first international satellite explosion in orbit as well as the Skylab space station falls back to Earth, making humanity aware of the danger of uncontrolled entry of space objects into the atmosphere and orbital pollution.
- 1970: All private space activities had to be approved by government agencies. NASA was the only provider of space launch services for the Western world.
- 1979: The European Space Agency launched Ariane, the first European launcher to compete with NASA in commercial missions.
- 1982: The first successful private US rocket launch occurred with Conestoga 1.
- 1984: The company Arianespace took over the commercial operation of Ariane, becoming the first private space launch company in the world.
- 1984: The Commercial Space Launch Act was signed in the U.S., encouraging private space activity.
- 1990s: Private companies began developing rockets and technology independently.
- 2001: Dennis Tito boards the first ever tourist space flight.

- 2002: SpaceX was founded by Elon Musk, marking a turning point in the space industry. -2010: The creation of reusable rockets, such as the Falcon 9, reduced costs and boosted private participation.
- 2007: Space debris becomes a bigger problem because of the Chinese anti-satellite test, which creates more than three thousand debris fragments, which is why UNOOSA and COPOUS recommend the use of Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.
- 2020s: The commercial space industry became a multibillion-dollar market, expanding into space tourism and satellite launches.
- 2025: The private space sector is valued at over 9.4 billion dollars, with rapid growth and increasing global competition.

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