



PACE MUN 2025
CONFLICTS TO CONSENSUS

BACKGROUND GUIDE

COMMITTEE: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS (UNOOSA)

AGENDA: PREVENTING THE WEAPONISATION OF
OUTER SPACE: STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL
NORMS FOR SPACE SECURITY AND PEACEFUL USE.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

*We would like to welcome you to the first edition of **PACEMUN** and the **United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)**. We are thrilled to witness young minds collaborate to explore the vast possibilities and pressing challenges of outer space. As representatives of the global community, this conference will encourage you to think critically, debate passionately, and engage meaningfully on issues of space exploration, sustainability, and the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of all humankind.*

Let us introduce ourselves, my name is Sreepadmanabhan Vimal, and I am honored to be serving as your Chair for this committee. Alongside me is Samarendu Muhury who will be serving as your Co-Chair for the committee.

Throughout our sessions, we will dive deep into critical topics and we encourage you to approach these issues with an open mind, a spirit of collaboration, and a determination to find solutions that align with the principles of the committee.

We are excited to see the innovative resolutions and fierce debates you will bring to the committee. Best of luck with your preparations, and we look forward to meeting you soon!

Warm regards,

*Sreepadmanabhan Vimal
Samarendu Muhury
Dias of UNOOSA
PACEMUN*

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is one of the main agencies within the UN system charged with promoting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of space.

UNOOSA supports five major international space treaties, including the Outer Space Treaty (1967), which remains one of the most important space laws of all time. Its headquarters are in Vienna, Austria, and it was established in 1958. The UNOOSA promotes capacity-building among emerging space nations, coordinates space-related activities among UN agencies, and facilitates global dialogue on space governance, sustainability, and security. To ensure that space remains a universal resource for all people, the Office also supports the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which provides a forum for developing standards and guidelines.

The agenda item "Preventing the Weaponisation of Outer Space: Strengthening International Norms for Space Security and Peaceful Use" addresses one of the most important issues facing the world community. The development of dual-use technologies, the militarisation of space capabilities, and the lack of legal frameworks to prevent the weaponisation of space have all raised serious concerns about global stability and security.

With the space domain becoming increasingly crowded and contested, UNOOSA's mission to promote peaceful cooperation and transparency in space operations is more crucial than ever. This committee looks into ways to strengthen the current legal framework, support actions to increase state confidence, and develop new international standards in order to maintain space as a place of peace and scientific advancement.

A DELVE INTO THE AGENDA:

AGENDA: Preventing the Weaponization of Outer Space: Strengthening International Norms for Space Security and Peaceful Use

The contemporary landscape of outer space governance is witnessing a critical juncture, where rapid advancements in space technology intersect with increasing geopolitical competition and military ambitions. Once envisioned as a realm for peaceful exploration and shared progress, outer space now faces the mounting threat of weaponization, manifested in the testing of anti-satellite weapons, the deployment of dual-use technologies, and the pursuit of strategic dominance beyond Earth's atmosphere. This evolving security dilemma challenges the very foundations of international norms that have long governed the peaceful use of outer space.

The militarization of space extends far beyond the deployment of defense systems; it signals a shift in the global balance of power, where states perceive orbital capabilities as integral to national security and deterrence strategies. The absence of comprehensive treaties regulating new forms of space weaponry, coupled with ambiguous definitions surrounding "peaceful use", has fostered a legal and diplomatic vacuum. Non-state actors, commercial entities, and emerging space powers further complicate this landscape, raising questions of accountability, transparency, and the sustainability of shared orbits.

At its core, the agenda seeks to preserve outer space as a global commons, free from conflict and open to scientific cooperation. Strengthening international norms requires revitalizing multilateral dialogue through the principles of transparency, confidence-building, and equitable access to space technologies.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) stands at the forefront of this endeavor, working to uphold the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 while catalyzing new frameworks that ensure security, stability, and trust among all spacefaring nations. The path forward demands collective vigilance and diplomatic foresight to prevent the militarization of the final frontier and sustain outer space as a domain of peace and shared human advancement.

PAST ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) has been instrumental in developing the international framework governing the peaceful use of space since its founding. In order to prevent the militarisation and weaponization of outer space, UNOOSA has helped the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) negotiate, approve, and implement a number of important international agreements and initiatives.

1. Development of Core Space Treaties

UNOOSA was instrumental in the drafting and implementation of the five major United Nations space treaties, which remain the legal backbone of international space governance:

The Outer Space Treaty (1967): Establishes that outer space shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction in orbit or on celestial bodies.

The Rescue Agreement (1968): Mandates assistance to astronauts in distress and reinforces the cooperative nature of space exploration.

The Liability Convention (1972): Defines state liability for damage caused by space objects, enhancing accountability in outer space operations.

The Registration Convention (1976): Requires states to register their space objects, promoting transparency and traceability.

The Moon Agreement (1979): Reaffirms that the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used solely for peaceful purposes and prohibits any military base or weapon testing.

2. Confidence-Building and Transparency Measures

UNOOSA has actively supported efforts to enhance transparency and confidence-building among spacefaring nations. In 2013, the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), established under the UN framework, submitted a report (A/68/189) emphasizing voluntary measures such as data-sharing, information exchange, and notifications of space activities to reduce risks of misunderstanding or conflict in outer space.

3. Promotion of the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) Guidelines

Through COPUOS, UNOOSA facilitated the adoption of the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (2019). These guidelines encourage responsible behavior in orbit, debris mitigation, and the non-interference principle — all of which indirectly contribute to preventing the weaponisation of space by promoting cooperative, transparent operations.

4. Coordination with Other UN Bodies

UNOOSA collaborates closely with other entities, including the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the UN First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, to ensure coherence between peaceful-use initiatives and arms control discussions. Although the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) resolution is primarily discussed in the CD, UNOOSA's work complements it through policy and technical coordination.

5. Capacity-Building and International Cooperation

UNOOSA's Programme on Space Applications and the UN-SPIDER (United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response) promote the peaceful use of space technology for sustainable development, thereby reinforcing the non-militarisation narrative. It also conducts workshops and technical assistance programs to help emerging space nations adopt responsible policies consistent with peaceful use principles.

THINGS TO RESEARCH ABOUT

1. *How can the Outer Space Treaty (1967) be updated to explicitly address modern counterspace weapons and dual-use satellite technologies that blur the line between civil and military use?*
2. *With over 6,800 cataloged debris fragments from ASAT tests by the United States, Russia, China, and India, what enforcement mechanisms could be developed to ensure accountability for debris-causing military actions in orbit?*
3. *How does the principle of *jus ad bellum* apply to acts of self-defence in outer space, and can current interpretations prevent states from justifying offensive ASAT operations under defensive pretexts?*
4. *While the OST bans weapons of mass destruction in space, should a new framework extend these prohibitions to include kinetic, directed-energy, and cyber counterspace systems that could destabilize orbital environments?*
5. *What institutional mechanisms could UNOOSA or a new UN body employ to verify uses of space technologies, distinguish between military and commercial actors, and enforce transparency among states?*
6. *Can multilateral transparency measures—such as notifications for proximity operations or shared databases of dual-use satellites—be institutionalized to prevent misunderstandings among major space powers?*
7. *Private corporations increasingly operate autonomous satellites and mega-constellations. How can international law evolve to regulate or sanction private space actors involved in potential militarized uses?*
8. *With emerging nations entering the space domain, how can equity in space resource access be balanced against the need for strict regulation of technological capabilities that could enable weaponization?*

9. *As cyber and electronic warfare capabilities extend into space, what strategies can prevent their use from escalating terrestrial conflicts or disabling civilian infrastructure dependent on satellite systems?*

10. *Should states pursue an expanded “Treaty on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)” mechanism under the UN framework, or negotiate an entirely new convention on space security to reflect 21st-century threats?*

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ADDRESS

Legal Framework and Governance

- *How can existing international treaties, such as the Outer Space Treaty (1967), be strengthened or updated to explicitly prohibit the deployment or testing of weapons in outer space?*
- *Should the international community consider the formulation of a new legally binding instrument addressing the weaponisation of space?*
- *What mechanisms can ensure state accountability for activities that contribute to the militarisation of outer space?*

Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs)

- *What practical measures can be introduced to enhance transparency and data sharing among nations regarding military and dual-use space assets?*
- *How can states be encouraged to notify the international community of launches, satellite deployments, or space activities with potential security implications?*
- *What role can UNOOSA play in verifying compliance with transparency commitments without infringing on national sovereignty?*

Monitoring, Verification, and Enforcement

- *What kind of verification system or monitoring body should be established to detect violations related to the placement or use of weapons in outer space?*
- *Can UNOOSA develop or coordinate technical mechanisms for space situational awareness (SSA) to ensure accountability?*
- *How can enforcement mechanisms be designed to ensure adherence to international norms in a domain with limited oversight capabilities?*

Peaceful Use and Dual-Use Technology Regulation

- *How should the international community address the growing challenge of dual-use technologies that can serve both civilian and military functions in space?*
- *What guidelines can be established to differentiate between defensive and offensive space systems?*
- *How can private sector and commercial actors be regulated to prevent inadvertent contribution to space weaponisation?*

Cooperation and Capacity-Building

- *How can UNOOSA promote equitable access to space technology*

and prevent an arms race dominated by a few advanced spacefaring nations?

- *What role should international cooperation play in supporting developing nations' capacity for peaceful space exploration and monitoring?*
- *Can partnerships between states, private entities, and UNOOSA enhance collective space security and sustainability?*

Norm Development and Future Governance

- *What confidence-building norms and behavioral guidelines can be formalized to reinforce the peaceful use of space?*
- *How can the Long-Term Sustainability (LTS) Guidelines and the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) be expanded to address security concerns?*
- *Should UNOOSA collaborate with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) or establish a dedicated sub-body to address emerging threats such as anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons and space-based missile systems?*

Crisis Prevention and Conflict Resolution in Space

- *What diplomatic or legal mechanisms can be developed to prevent misinterpretations or escalation of space-related incidents between nations?*
- *How can UNOOSA facilitate communication channels or emergency response protocols to address space security crises?*

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**GOOD LUCK
DELEGATE!**

See you at the Conference!

