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**Committee on the Peaceful
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Legal Subcommittee
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Draft report

Addendum

XI. General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/72, the Legal Subcommittee considered agenda item 13, entitled “General exchange of views on the application of international law to small-satellite activities”, as a single issue/item for discussion on its agenda.
2. The representatives of China, France, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Mexico and the Russian Federation made statements under agenda item 13. The representative of Colombia made a statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. A statement was also made under the item by the observer for SKAO. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were made by representatives of other member States.
3. The Subcommittee heard a presentation entitled “A Brazilian insight of the small satellites era”, by the representative of Brazil.
4. The Subcommittee took note of the questionnaire on the application of international law to small-satellite activities ([A/AC.105/1285](#), annex I, appendix II), considered by the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space. The Subcommittee noted that both the questionnaire and the replies received (see [A/AC.105/C.2/2024/CRP.20](#)) represented valuable contributions to discussions on legal issues regarding small-satellite activities at the international level.
5. The Subcommittee recalled the joint ITU/Office for Outer Space Affairs document providing guidance on space object registration and frequency management for small and very small satellites and the background paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled “Registration of large constellations and megaconstellations” ([A/AC.105/C.2/L.322](#)).
6. The Subcommittee noted that, in view of the growing trend of small-satellite activities and in order to guarantee the safety and sustainability of outer space activities, those small-satellite activities should be carried out within existing international frameworks, including the United Nations treaties and principles on



outer space, the ITU Constitution and Convention and the ITU Radio Regulations, and non-binding instruments such as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee and the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Affairs of the Committee (A/74/20, annex II).

7. The Subcommittee reaffirmed the opportunities and benefits that small-satellite activities offered for accessing space, in particular for developing States and related governmental and non-governmental organizations, including universities and educational and research institutes, and for private industries with limited resources.

8. Some delegations expressed the view that, considering the essential role of space objects, irrespective of their size, for the socioeconomic development of States, an ad hoc legal regime or any other legal mechanism related to small satellites that might impose limitations on the design, building, launch or use of space objects by developing countries should not be created. The delegations expressing that view reiterated the importance of ensuring guaranteed and equitable access to orbital positions in the geostationary orbit according to the needs of all countries, in particular developing countries, and that satellite removal or elimination should be done in a responsible manner and that no space object should be removed or eliminated without the prior consent or authorization of the registering State.

9. Some delegations expressed the view that, despite the advantages of using small satellites, there were growing concerns about the impact of small-satellite activities on space safety and sustainability, including with regard to access to space, owing to the challenge of predicting and preventing collisions of space objects given the increased congestion of the low Earth orbit and near-Earth space; with regard to the possible creation of additional space debris owing to short lifespans; and with regard to their negative impact on astronomical observations conducted by ground-based observatories and on the preservation of dark skies.

10. The view was expressed that, although the Outer Space Treaty provided the core guidance for the conduct of small-satellite activities, it was important to further improve governance of those activities and to consider that matter in coordination with agenda items of both subcommittees, including on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, space traffic management and space debris. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that cooperation with ITU and other relevant international organizations was important for the effective governance of small-satellite activities.

11. The view was expressed that activities pertaining to all space objects, including small satellites, should be carried out in full compliance with the norms of international space law, including in compliance with the requirements for the registration of spacecraft and the requirements under article IX of the Outer Space Treaty. The delegation expressing that view was also of the view that it was important to implement, in national legislation, the internationally agreed recommendations pertaining to small-satellite activities. Those recommendations included guideline B.8 of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Committee for the design and operation of space objects, regardless of their physical and operational characteristics, and guideline A.5 for enhancing the practice of registering space objects, irrespective of their size.

12. Some delegations expressed the view that, in the light of trends connected to large constellations, it was important to further address the rational and equitable use of the low Earth orbit and frequency spectrums, ways to avoid operational interference and reduce collision risks, international coordination and the disclosure of information and data on space situational awareness activities, and how best to register large constellations.

13. The Subcommittee agreed that the continuation of its work under the present item would provide valuable opportunities to address topical issues relating to international and national policy and regulatory measures regarding the use of small satellites.