

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Specialized Committee**



UNOOSA

Chair | Adan Leal

**Specialied Committee Background
Guide**

**Houston Area Model United Nations 47
January 27-28, 2022**



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Note to Delegates

Delegates,

I am Adan Leal, a senior at the University of Texas at Austin. I am studying finance and have done Model UN for almost nine years now and I am very excited for this conference. I cannot wait to see the solutions and creativity you guys have to bring to the table! I hope that you are as excited as I am to reach the stars and put our mark on space itself. Do let me know if there is anything I can do to help you prepare for this committee or any conference questions in general. I look forward to seeing you all in conference. See you soon!

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GA Plenary

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What is UNOOSA?

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) works to promote international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of space, and in the utilisation of space science and technology for sustainable economic and social development. The Office assists any United Nations Member States to establish legal and regulatory frameworks to govern space activities and strengthens the capacity of developing countries to use space science technology and applications for development by helping to integrate space capabilities into national development programmes.



Topic 1: Commercialization of Space Travel

Statement of the Problem

As time has continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, the space economy has grown more and more important to the modern world. The commercial use of satellites for utilities on earth is merely the beginning for the blossoming future of the space economy. The promise of space travel brings hopeful prospects of industry, resource extraction, and potentially even life all in space. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that this committee pay mind to the increasing role the stars above plays for the future of cooperation of nations, and thus acts to preemptively curtail potential sources of conflicts among nations.

The issues both causing and stemming from the commercialization of space travel are threefold: the ambiguity of the current laws set in place, the obstacles set by space debris, and the potential issues that could arise from habitation in space. These should be the focus on legislation centered around commercialization of space.

Ambiguity of the Laws

As it stands, the standing agreement in place regulating the use of space and thus space travel is the Outer Space treaty. However, the treaty is intentionally ambiguous on key aspects of the nature of space travel and usage. Consequently, this allows scenarios rise such as the US legislation, the US Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act. A similarly vague piece of legislation that allows US industries to engage in the commercial exploration and exploitation of space resources, while remaining silent on sovereignty or ownership rights of the resources to begin with. Such legislation is paramount in terms of the state of space travel and would need to be addressed to ensure conflict is prevented.

Space Debris

The usage of space over the decades has left the low orbit area of Earth to be cluttered with various bits of debris. As time goes on, this can prove to be fatal to the infantile space economy and could shut out chances to branch beyond Earth before any real attempts can be made. Space travel relies on access to space above all, and unchecked space debris threatens to choke off this access. This is a problem for all members of the current and hopeful space faring community. However, this problem is not equal in its instigators, and consequently leads to issues in attempting to resolve it. This committee must address the glaring, but difficult issue of space debris if the future of space travel is to be maintained.

Space Habitation

True colonies set in space are doubtlessly far beyond the current capabilities of space agencies, however, the thought must still be present for this committee. Events such as SpaceX's continuous successful launches into space would be inconsequential if the main goal were for space flight to be possible for private individuals. The issue stems from the fact that SpaceX looks further beyond just space flight and towards goals such as Mars to be achievable for industries to seek opportunities in. Therefore, in order to be proactive and curtail potential conflict stemming from lack of action now, this committee needs to address regulations governing possible and perhaps eventual space habitation beyond earth.

Questions to Consider

- Who benefits from ambiguous legislations over space rights?
- How can scenarios such as space debris can be handled? Think of potential solutions for similar scenarios i.e., climate change
- What situations are parallel to a potential space economy opening up to the private sector.

