



Mars Treatymaking Workshop Results and Insights from ISU SSP15

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The Problem

Tensions

The Group

Why Mars?

Relevant International Law

The Solution

Getting Familiarized

Professional Framework

Lessons Learned

Benefits of Diversity

Roles Outside Your Comfort Zone

Key Treaty-making Behaviors and Practices

The Futures?

Concluding remarks

Applications

Conclusions

Tensions

Existing treaties:

Outer space [...] is not subject to national appropriation by

- *Claims of sovereignty,*
- *Means and use of occupation,*

or by any other means.

[Outer Space Treaty, 1967]

Interests in Mars:

Potential resources

National self-bolstering

Scientific exploration

Arena for international cooperation?



Image: ESA

The Group

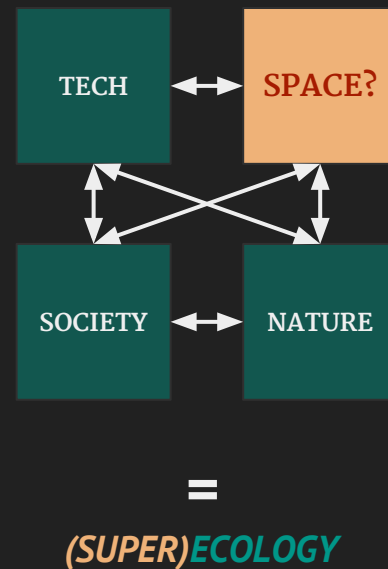
French **electronics** engineering student,
Japanese **catalytic combustion** student,
Norwegian **astrophysics** student,
Chinese **Aerospace** department leader,
Italian **Space** Agency lawyer,
Australian **space** law expert,
Chinese **Satellite Comm. Co.** secretary general,
American NASA **systems engineer**,
Chinese **Great Wall** deputy manager,
Korean **fighter pilot**,
American **project manager**,
Italian **aerospace** engineer



COPUOS Chair
COPUOS observers:
Holy See
ESA
Delegates:
Austria,
France,
China,
Republic of Korea,
Russian Federation,
United States of America

Why Mars?

- Evoked our aspirations - Mars as the “promised land”
- Cultural and historical rationales for presence on Mars differ:
 - Nature
 - Conquering the “wilderness” vs Symbiosis
 - Society
 - Expansion vs Inner stability
 - Technology
 - *Supporting society or solely for harnessing resources?*
 - Space?
- Mars as indicator on humanity’s evolutionary readiness to leave the Tsiolkovskian cradle



[Von Puttkammer, 1987]

Relevant International Space Law

1967

Outer Space Treaty

Outer Space: **benefit** all mankind

Free for exploration

Not: National **appropriation** and claim of sovereignty

Use: solely for **peaceful** purposes

Avoid harmful **contamination** of space and bodies

1979

Moon Treaty

Moon and other celestial bodies (incl. Mars)

Exclusive use: **peaceful** purposes

Environments should not be disrupted

UN: to be informed of use of Mars and location

Moon's (+++) natural resources: **common heritage** of all mankind

+

1968

Rescue Agreement

+

1972

Liability Convention

+

1976

Registration Convention

Getting Familiarized



Professional Framework



UNITED NATIONS

JOURNAL

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION
Athens, 1-10 July 2025

MONDAY, 6 JULY 2025

SUMMARY OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Room 103 - Richard

780th Meeting

Report of the Committee to the General Assembly



United
Nations

General Assembly

A/AC.105/C.2/L.491

Distribution: Limited
1 July 2025

Original: English

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Sixty-Seventh Session
Athens, 6 July 2025
Agenda Item 4
Draft Version of a Mars Treaty

Draft version of a Mars Treaty

**I. Revised text of the draft Mars Treaty as submitted by the
Russian Federation**

Treaty on Principles Governing the Exploration and Use of Mars

The States Parties to this Agreement,

The Solution

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Christopher Johnson
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Sixty-Seventh Session, Athens

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, and Representatives

It is my privilege to welcome you all to the sixty-seventh session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It is an honor and an opportunity to once again preside over the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would like to thank all of you for your continuous support provided to me,

Benefits of Diversity

Valuable insights would not have been shared if everyone had the same background

When having an engineering background: had to adapt - from numbers and equations to bargaining over words

Formality of UN COPUOS session was enlightening. Exposed to this, learned the need to speak respectfully and clearly

Affecting the negotiation: Personality and the stance of the nation they are representing

Non-space faring states have large influence, will affect the length and complexity of the process - may take decades

Roles Outside Your Comfort Zone

*Insider vs outsider perspective - very apparent that these **are not the same** when others represent your own agency*

*Swapping of roles allowed us to express our **understanding** of other nations' priorities and values*

*One's interests not aligned with the country you are representing - requiring us to **shift perspective** and not express personal opinions*

Lessons
Learned



Key Treatymaking Behaviors and Practices

Negotiations

Unstated agreement:
striving to reach agreements
that everyone could accept -
*adhering to idea of
an evolved way of leadership*

Organisation

Small countries as mediators:
propose solutions
that **would not be accepted** if
coming from an “**opposing
power**”

Behind closed doors

Confidence and trust-building:
*Sharing of information and
possibly incriminating
ideas*

Consensus-based decision
making takes time
-
*but is easier to achieve when
all parties are open to listen to
each other*

*Pre-committee meetings (allies):
of paramount importance*

lessen the
difficulties of
reaching
consensus

allow strategy-
building

Agree on
acceptable ideas
from opposition
(bargaining cards)

*Potential to influence
negotiations:
through **informal** social
interactions*

The Futures?

Moon Treaty:

Easy to draw a parallel to Mars - the Moon Treaty had no significant impact

Concern from less influential states about attempts on allowing appropriation

Atmosphere of competition?

Change in terminology:

From “man” to “humankind”, “colonisation” to “continued presence”

Different roles in COPUOS:

Member states may have opinions differing from mother agencies

Applications

- Practice negotiations in an international forum
- Helpful for any who wants to engage in international activities
- Organiser must know the setting to be taught
- Workshop format suitable outside ISU



Photo: (C) Indian Space Research Organisation, Mars Colour Camera (MCC)



Conclusions

Greater understanding of importance of the inspiration provided by humanity's entry into space and the potential exploration of Mars by humankind.

Workshop provided solid introduction

Extremely realistic

Advance lectures and distribution of material crucial to its success

High impact even though relatively short time spent

Space:
develop mutual understanding and strengthen friendly relations

Process:
Lengthy, complicated and frustrating

Opposition of ideas between main space powers?

Things to Consider:
Political will for a Mars Treaty?
Aligning this treaty with others? Revision of old concepts?
Mars landing before treaty (as with Moon landing and unsuccessful Moon Treaty?)
Better: principle declaration by UN GA than a full treaty?