



**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-sixth session
Vienna, 11–22 February 2019**

Governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies: categorization of topics

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its sixtieth session, in 2017, requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fifth session, in 2018, containing a proposed workplan on how to improve overall governance and the method of work of the Committee as a whole. States members of the Committee would be invited to provide ideas. The Committee agreed that the conference room paper, as revised on the basis of discussions at the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fifth session, would then be submitted to the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-seventh session, in 2018. The paper, as further revised at that session, would be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its sixty-first session, in June 2018 (A/72/20, para. 327).

2. In response to that request, the Secretariat reviewed the reports on the sessions of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee in the past decade, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of considerations on organizational matters and methods of work. Furthermore, the Secretariat developed a proposed workplan for the period 2019–2021, aimed at reaching a decision on a set of concrete and detailed proposals, to be considered by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session, in 2021. The proposed process is meant to be carried out through a collaboration between the Group of Bureaux Members (Group of 15) and the Secretariat, with the aim of presenting concrete measures for consideration by both subcommittees and the Committee.

3. The outcome of the work of the Secretariat referred to in paragraph 2 above was presented in the conference room paper entitled “Governance and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies: proposed workplan” (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.13).

4. Having considered the conference room paper, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-fifth session, and the Legal Subcommittee, at its

* Reissued for technical reasons on 23 January 2019.



fifty-seventh session, both in 2018, took note of the proposed multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and recommended that the proposed workplan be considered by the Committee at its sixty-first session ([A/AC.105/1167](#), annex I, paras. 16 and 17; and [A/AC.105/1177](#), annex I, para. 9).

5. At its sixty-first session, the Committee agreed to the following multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, as recommended by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Committee decided, in that regard, that the work under the multi-year workplan should be conducted under the current item of the Committee entitled “Future role of the Committee” ([A/73/20](#), para. 382).

Multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

2018 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to prepare a document in all the official languages of the United Nations, in advance of the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 2019, containing a categorization of the range of organizational measures raised by delegations in sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies over the past decade and an outline of additional topics for consideration on organizational matters and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

2019 Consideration of the document at the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, and of the Committee, under its agenda item entitled “Future role of the Committee”, which might be introduced as an agenda item for both subcommittees, as appropriate. The work of the Working Group on the Status and Application on the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space of the Legal Subcommittee, under the multi-year workplan on thematic priority 2 of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50), will be taken into account

2020 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to present a revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations, taking into account the outcome of the considerations undertaken in 2019, containing concrete, action-oriented proposals for consideration by the two subcommittees and the Committee

2021 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to present a second revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations for final input by the two subcommittees. The document is to be updated in all the official languages of the United Nations, for action by the Committee

6. In response to the request for the preparation of a document containing a categorization of the range of organizational measures, the Secretariat has compiled previous suggestions and considerations and grouped them into the following categories: statements and presentations; organizational work; and synergies and cooperation. Under each category, the measures are further divided into two subcategories: measures that are already implemented and proposals for further consideration.

7. A matrix summarizing those organizational measures is provided in the annex to the present note.

II. Categorization of the range of organizational measures¹

1. Statements and presentations

Measures already implemented

8. The Committee agreed that, as a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes. Additionally, scientific and technical presentations should be closely linked to the agenda items of the Committee and should not exceed 15 minutes in duration. The Chair should remind delegations if that length of time is exceeded, as appropriate (A/66/20, para. 298; A/AC.105/987 para. 219; A/AC.105/1088, para. 275).

9. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recalled the agreement reached at its fifty-second session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275) and added that States members and observers of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat, no later than one week before each session of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/1138, para. 292), their wish to make scientific and technical presentations, and under which item the presentation is to be made, before the start of the session, to optimize the plan of work of the session (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275; A/AC.105/987, para. 220; A/66/20, para. 298). Furthermore, the Secretariat would take the necessary decisions in the scheduling of presentations in the interest of the smooth running of the sessions (A/AC.105/1138, para. 292).

10. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee decided that speaking notes for scientific and technical presentations should be provided to facilitate simultaneous interpretation (A/66/20, para. 298; A/AC.105/987, para. 220; A/AC.105/1088, para. 275).

11. In accordance with the decision made by the Committee in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 297) and on the basis of the proposal made at its request by the Secretariat to review the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282), the Committee agreed to discontinue their use and to use digital recordings. At its sixty-first session, the Committee agreed that digital recordings be used for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee starting at its fifty-sixth session (A/73/20, para. 383).

12. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agreed that the number of scientific and technical presentations should be limited to a maximum of four presentations per meeting and that States members and permanent observers of the Committee should pay due attention to the need to keep the overall number of presentations in the session at a reasonable level (A/AC.105/1038, para. 242).

13. The Committee welcomed with appreciation the compendium of rules of procedure and methods of work related to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies contained in conference room paper A/AC.105/2016/CRP.5 and prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the request made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Committee in 2015 (A/70/20, para. 359; A/71/20, para. 317; A/AC.105/1088, para. 278; A/AC.105/1109, para. 266; A/AC.105/1113, para. 262).

Proposals for further consideration

14. Some delegations expressed the view that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should give more importance to substantive issues and avoid commercially oriented technical presentations (A/67/20, para. 342).

15. The Committee took note of various proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the subcommittees, such as uploading statements on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in a timely manner and the introduction of webcasts, limiting the number of interventions by delegations under each agenda item, limiting the length of presentations of information on national activities and

¹ The inventory is not exhaustive and should not be regarded as final; it is subject to modifications, including the addition of new proposals, by States members of the Committee.

projects in statements, reducing the length and quantity of technical presentations, and the establishment of selection criteria (A/65/20, para. 321).

2. Organization of work

Measures already implemented

16. The Committee has agreed to apply to the organization of its work the same methods as proposed by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. In that regard, the Committee has stressed the need to apply maximum flexibility in the scheduling of items, in particular those to be considered by the working groups (A/66/20, para. 298; A/68/20, para. 346; A/69/20, para. 390; A/AC.105/987, para. 216; A/AC.105/1088, para. 275; A/AC.105/990, para. 194; A/AC.105/1003, para. 207; A/AC.105/1045, para. 199). The possibility of reopening agenda items for consideration, if necessary, would contribute to this flexibility (A/67/20, para. 341).

17. The Committee agreed that the reports to be submitted by Member States on their national activities in outer space (A/AC.105/958, para. 19) should comprise a summary of those activities and not exceed three pages (A/AC.105/987, para. 217; A/65/20, para. 317).

Proposals for further consideration

18. The view was expressed that consideration of legal aspects of space activities should be undertaken during the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee, in order to allow enough time for consideration of technical aspects by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/1088, para. 282).

19. The view was expressed that, in the scheduling of the meetings, precedence should be given to substantive discussions on agenda items in plenary and in working groups, as well as other important matters, instead of technical presentations (A/68/20, para. 351; A/AC.105/990, para. 189; A/67/20, para. 338).

20. Some delegations expressed the view that the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee should be shortened, allocating the savings in time to the sessions of the Committee or the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The reallocation of meeting time from the Legal Subcommittee to the Committee could therefore be done with the understanding that the time could be allocated back to the Legal Subcommittee, when necessary (A/AC.105/990, para. 176; A/AC.105/1003, para. 196; A/66/20, para. 300).

21. Some delegations expressed the view that the time allocated to the plenary was not fully utilized in view of the lack of substantive issues on its agenda (A/AC.105/990, para. 180), and that the role of the Legal Subcommittee as the principal international forum to promote and develop space law should be strengthened, in order to demonstrate the operational relevance and importance of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/1067, para. 204; A/AC.105/1113, para. 255).

22. The view was expressed that, as substantial progress had not been made on certain issues, some items could be included on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee every two years (A/AC.105/990, para. 184).

23. Some delegations expressed the view that the work of the Legal Subcommittee must be streamlined to improve the effectiveness of discussions and allow the cost-effective participation of delegations in the work of the Subcommittee. The reports could be optimized by avoiding the repetitive reflection of views and making them more action-oriented (A/AC.105/990, paras. 187, 188 and 191; A/AC.105/1003, para. 202; A/AC.105/1045, para. 198).

24. The Committee noted various proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the subcommittees, such as the clustering of agenda items, beginning meetings promptly as scheduled, having only one item open at a time, and making

better use of existing tools (for example, the daily *Journal* and the indicative schedule of work) (A/65/20, para. 321).

25. Some delegations emphasized that the discussion on the future role of the Legal Subcommittee as the prime international body for space law-making was important and recalled the proposal by Germany for the renewal of the structure of the agenda and the organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee, as contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.293/Rev.2 (A/AC.105/1113, para. 254; A/AC.105/1090, para. 227; A/AC.105/1067, para. 205). Some delegations reiterated that, while the intention of the proposal by Germany was welcome, in particular on the restructuring of the schedule of work of the Subcommittee, some elements of the proposal needed further clarification and elaboration, including on the proposed new structure, with preparatory groups and working groups (A/AC.105/1090, paras. 228 and 229; A/AC.105/1067, para. 207).

26. The view was expressed that the Committee should establish rules of procedure, as well as review its current practice of making decisions by consensus, and that the Secretariat should consult member States on the matter. (A/AC.105/1067, para.112; A/AC.105/1090, para. 232).

3. Synergies and cooperation

Proposals for further consideration

27. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee and its subcommittees (A/AC.105/1045, para. 197; A/AC.105/1067, para. 211; A/AC.105/1090, para. 231; A/AC.105/1113, para. 260).

28. Some delegations expressed the view that the work of the subcommittees should be closely coordinated, including by organizing sessions consecutively, with the possibility of holding joint sessions on some days, to derive greater benefits from the participation of experts from both subcommittees (A/AC.105/990, para. 181).

III. Additional topics for consideration proposed by the Secretariat

29. In accordance with the workplan, an outline of additional topics for consideration on organizational matters and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, proposed by the Secretariat, are detailed below.

30. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Secretariat proposes to contribute to the reduction of the carbon footprint by using print-on-demand services in meeting rooms.

31. Acknowledging that making information about the meetings available in various digital formats could facilitate consultations and the sharing of information, thereby contributing to the efficiency of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, the Secretariat proposes, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/285, the consideration of the future utilization of the PaperSmart model, developed to promote the use of electronic media and provide participants with electronic access to meeting programmes, agendas, documents and statements, as an experimental way to enhance the work of the Committee and its subcommittees.

32. In line with the recommendation by the Action Team on Space Exploration and Innovation, under UNISPACE+50 thematic priority 1, to review ways and means of working with non-governmental entities (A/AC.105/1168, para. 114), the Secretariat proposes the allocation of time during sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees, as appropriate, for a dedicated dialogue with non-governmental entities, including industry and private sector entities, with the aim of fostering cooperation with the broader space community.

33. With a view to supporting the consideration of items on the agendas of the Committee and its subcommittees, the Secretariat proposes the inclusion of established sub-items or a set of questions under selected agenda items, as appropriate, in order to provide further guidance and to stimulate debate on those items.

Annex

Summary of organizational measures implemented or proposed for further consideration^a

<i>Status</i>	<i>Category</i>		
	<i>Statements and presentations</i>	<i>Organization of work</i>	<i>Synergies and cooperation</i>
Already implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes • Scientific and technical presentations should be linked to the agenda items and not exceed 15 minutes • Speaking notes should be provided to facilitate simultaneous interpretation • Communicate in advance of the session the desire to make a technical presentation and indicate the item under which the presentation is to be made • Discontinue the use of unedited transcripts and, at the same time, implement the use of digital recordings • Make available to Member States a compendium that includes the rules, procedures and practices, including with regard to the processing of documentation, of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies • Presentations should be limited to four per meeting. Member States should pay due attention to the need to keep the overall number at a reasonable level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on national activities in outer space should comprise a summary of those activities and not exceed three pages • Maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of items • Allow for the possibility of reopening agenda items for consideration, if necessary 	

^a This summary is not exhaustive and should not be regarded as final; it is subject to modifications, including the addition of new proposals, by States members of the Committee.

<i>Status</i>	<i>Category</i>		
	<i>Statements and presentations</i>	<i>Organization of work</i>	<i>Synergies and cooperation</i>
Proposals for further consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should give more importance to substantive issues and avoid commercially oriented technical presentations • Reduce the length and quantity of technical presentations and establish selection criteria • Clustering of agenda items; having only one item open at a time; making better use of existing tools; limiting the number of interventions by delegations under each agenda item; limiting the length of presentations of information on national activities and projects in statements; beginning meetings promptly as scheduled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of legal aspects of space activities should be undertaken during the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee • Precedence should be given to substantive discussions on agenda items, instead of technical presentations • Shorten the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee for the benefit of the sessions of the Committee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee • Strengthen the role of the Legal Subcommittee by including substantive items for discussion in the agenda • As no substantial progress has been made on certain issues under consideration by the Legal Subcommittee, some items could be included in its agenda every two years • Items on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee should be streamlined, and the content should be optimized by avoiding the repetitive reflection of views and making it more action-oriented • Review the Committee's current practice of making decisions by consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction and cooperation between the Committee, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee should be enhanced, especially with regard to cross-cutting issues • Closely coordinate the work of the subcommittees by, inter alia, organizing sessions consecutively, with the possibility of holding joint sessions on some days, to derive greater benefits from the participation of experts from both subcommittees