Background Paper

Committee: United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs

Topic A: Utilization of Extraterrestrial Natural Resources and Preservation of Planetary Environments.

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The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNNOSA) is the United Nations office responsible for promoting international cooperation, ensuring that space is safe and peaceful for everyone. It helps nations work together internationally, ensuring that all countries benefit from space activities. Furthermore, this will provide checks and balances among all participating countries.

In recent years, the exploitation of extraterrestrial natural resources such as minerals, asteroids, and other celestial bodies has become one of the most debated issues in space governance. As technology advances, private companies and national agencies have begun exploring the economic potential of space mining. Space technology, mostly controlled by wealthier nations and private companies, could create an economic chasm between developed and developing countries, further creating a new form of inequality. But, how can all countries ensure that space resources are shared fairly among nations? Some countries might never have the opportunity to benefit from space resources, so promoting equal access ensures fairness and cooperation among nations.

One of the most significant issues regarding this topic is the unclear and insufficient legal and regulatory framework of resource extraction. There are no universal rules defining who owns

or can exploit natural resources from celestial bodies. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty prohibits national ownership of space, but it does not specify how resources can be used or owned. This could cause conflicts between countries and companies competing for territory or resources. Creating a transparent, equal, and fair legal framework is key to preventing disputes, ensuring all countries benefit equally, and maintain peace in outer space.

Extracting materials from asteroids or the Moon may damage extraterrestrial environments and ecosystems. Mining operations could release dust, debris, and chemical waste, disrupting potential ecosystems and interfering with future scientific research. Without clear international regulations, the extraction of these materials could cause long-lasting damage. Additionally, altering the natural resources could interfere with future missions or research. Beyond that, it raises an important question: should humanity really start exploring places that have never been touched before? If the use of extraterrestrial bodies continues, space mining could repeat the same environmental mistakes that countries have made on Earth. Protecting these areas preserves their importance in ecological value, ensuring responsible exploration and sustainability.

1959 - Antarctic Treaty signed, establishing the idea of peaceful cooperation and shared spaces.
1967 - Outer Space Treaty adopted, declaring that space belongs to everyone.
2015 - U.S. Commercial Space Act passed, allowing companies to use space resources.
2020 - Artemis Accords set new rules for lunar exploration.
2025 (Simulated) - UNOOSA proposes the “Sustainable Space Resources Framework”, which seeks a fair and responsible use of space resources.

In conclusion, the utilization of extraterrestrial natural resources has incredible opportunities for scientific discovery and innovation, but also includes serious challenges. Space mining could increase inequality, drive scientific progress, and economic growth. Establishing clear, fair, and sustainable international laws is essential to ensuring that space remains peaceful and safe for everyone. Humanity needs to act responsibly and make sure exploration doesn't turn into exploitation. If space exploration is managed wisely, nations could unite through cooperation, turning space into a place of opportunity and equality.

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