



# UNOOSA STUDY GUIDE



## **The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

The United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945 in the wake of World War II, with the primary goal of maintaining international peace and security. Today, the United Nations has 193 recognized Member States and strives to tackle a wide breadth of international issues ranging from denuclearization to corruption to the achievement of equality on a global scale. In order to achieve its mandates, the United Nations is divided into six organs: The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Councils, the United Nations Security Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice. Each organ of the UN has its own distinct role in the UN's work to combat global challenges, and these organs work in tandem with other UN bodies, agencies, national governments, NGOs, and civil society to create a better global future.

The UN's mandate is guided by two primary documents: The Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The preamble of the UN Charter outlines the determined purposes of the UN, which include reaffirming faith in fundamental human rights, establishing conditions in which international peace and justice can be maintained, and uniting in strength to maintain international peace and security. The UDHR further bolsters the ideals that underpin the founding of the UN and the Charter. Inalienable rights and dignity are recognized as being at the core of freedom, justice, and peace in the world, and thus the UDHR guides the decision-making processes undertaken within the UN.

In 2015, the UN and its Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The goals are as follows: (1) no poverty, (2) zero hunger, (3) good health and wellbeing, (4) quality education, (5) gender equality, (6) clean water and sanitation, (7) affordable and clean energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) industry, innovation and infrastructure, (10) reduced inequalities, (11) sustainable cities and communities, (12) responsible production and consumption, (13) climate action, (14) life below water, (15) life on land, (16) peace justice and strong institutions, and (17) partnership for the goals. The Sustainable Development Goals are considered to universally apply to all and aim to help countries to fight inequality and end poverty while ensuring that no part of the population is left behind. By 2030, the United Nations, in tandem with its partners, hopes to see these goals become a reality and make the world a more sustainable place for future generations.



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## Overview:

**Committee:** United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

**Agenda:** Privatisation and militarisation of space-Climate Change, Militarization of Space, Space Traffic; Evaluation of rules and regulations regarding - Asteroid Mining and Planetary Exploration.

### Committee History:

*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.*

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/aboutus/index.html>

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs was founded in 1958. It was initially created as a small expert unit within the United Nations Secretariat to service the ad hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In 1962 the unit was moved to work under the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs. Later in that decade it was transformed into the Outer Space Affairs Division of that Department. In 1992, the Division was transformed into the Office for Outer Space Affairs within the Department for Political Affairs. One year later the Office was relocated to the United Nations Office at Vienna.

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/aboutus/history/index.html>

To enable the orderly conduct of space activities, a number of multilateral treaties have been agreed on by the United Nations General Assembly. The most important agreement is the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. “Among the principles embodied in the Treaty are the freedom of exploration and use of space for the benefit and interest of all countries, the non-appropriation of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, and the prohibition of the deployment of nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction in outer space.”

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/aboutus/history/treaties.html>

Crucially, the democratization of space will pose new challenges for policymakers, given that the existing legal framework has effectively applied to only a handful of states. The Outer Space Treaty outlined four basic concepts:

- the parties agreed to keep space open for exploration and use by all states,
- take responsibility for all activities conducted from within their borders (whether carried out by governmental or nongovernmental entities),
- assume liability for damage caused by their space objects, and cooperate with one another and
- provide mutual assistance. Due to newly established accessibility, other non-state actors now have access to space.

“Nongovernmental organizations may start pursuing missions that undermine governments’ objectives. An activist billionaire wanting to promote transparency could deploy a constellation of satellites to monitor and then tweet the movements of troops worldwide. Criminal syndicates could use satellites to monitor the patterns of law enforcement in order elude capture, or a junta could use them to track rivals after a coup.”



The aforementioned article argues that the current system lacks “situational awareness”. There are currently thousands of objects in orbit.

As the number of players in space increases, situational awareness will become even more important. Basically, it is in everyone’s best interest to share data in order to prevent collisions. The US has so far been tasked with that tracking; however, recently other countries and non-state actors have started programs of their own.

Finally, in regard to accidents and liability involving non-state actors, it will become necessary to add new norms to the Outer Space Treaty. Although the treaty holds countries responsible for the nongovernmental activities that initiate from within their borders, until recently, technical barriers meant that governments never had to worry about the prospect of such activities. As those barriers fall, policymakers will need to establish norms concerning risk-assessment, liability, accidents and misappropriation.

**To strengthen the framework designed by the Outer Space Treaty, four other treaties were adopted.**

The Rescue Agreement of 1968 requires States to assist an astronaut in case of accident, distress, emergency or unintended landing.

The Liability Convention of 1972 establishes the standards of liability for damage caused by space objects.

The Registration Convention of 1975 requires States to register all objects launched into outer space with the United Nations.

The Moon Agreement of 1979 elaborates on the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty as they apply to the Moon and other celestial bodies.

“Five sets of principles support that body of law. These are the declaration of legal principles governing the activities of States in Outer Space (1963), the principles relating to international direct television broadcasting (1982), the principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth (1986), the principles on the use of nuclear power sources (1992) and the declaration on international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space (1996).”

**Use of Space technology to limit orbital debris:**

Given the growing commercialization of space, particularly through the development of ever smaller satellites, global security also concerns orbiting debris and decommissioned assets. A growing number of objects in orbit means a growing chance of impact, which potentially produces hundreds of fragments. While the risk of collisions and even an irreversible chain reaction (see: Kessler syndrome) remain disputed, even among academics, the principles outlined in the previous chapter highlight another challenge for the international community: what if a decommissioned Soviet-era satellite collides with a private Indian mini-satellite? Currently, the Russian Federation is liable. What if a US-based company purposely steers a satellite at the end of its lifespan into a new one of their competitors? Who is liable, especially for damage caused by fragments resulting from the collision, since it may be impossible to determine where a fragment originated from?

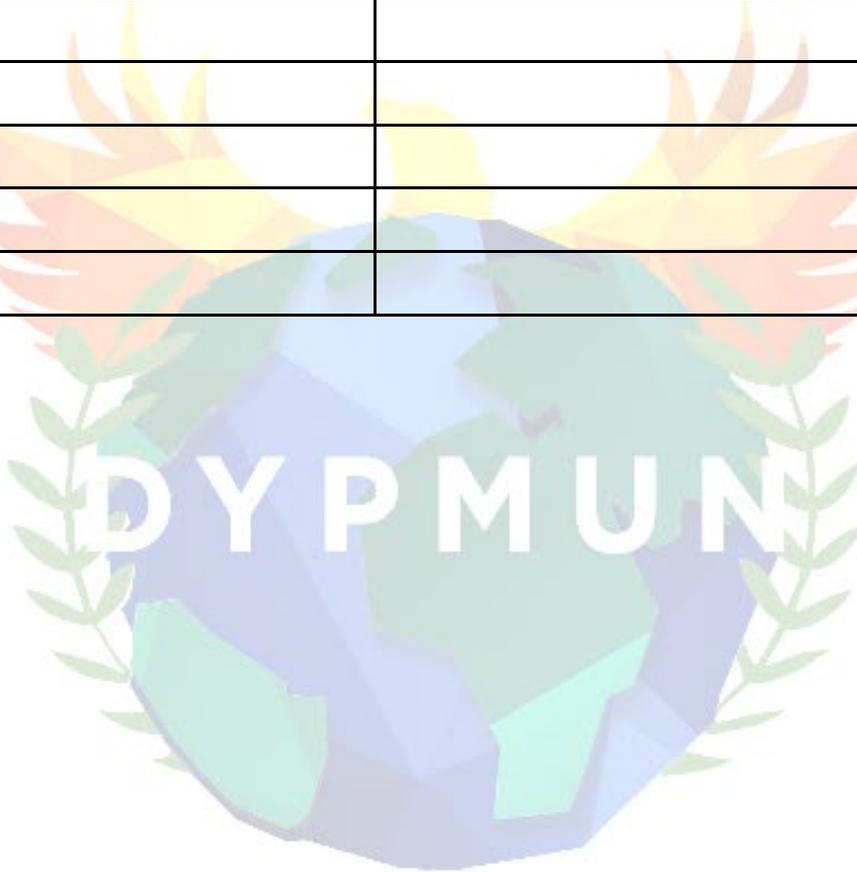
**Blocs:**

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## Western Bloc

## Eastern Bloc

<u>USA</u>		<u>INDIA</u>
<u>UK</u>		<u>JAPAN</u>
<u>FRANCE</u>		<u>CHINA</u>
<u>AVIO</u>		<u>DPRK</u>
<u>ESA</u>		<u>MALAYSIA</u>
<u>SPACE X</u>		<u>PAKISTAN</u>
<u>BOEING</u>		<u>SRI LANKA</u>



**Practical tips:**

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How to do your research? Especially if you are a first-timer, you might be thinking: well... What now? One of the objectives on MUNs is to teach you how to establish and defend your own position. This position has to be reasonably similar to the real world position of the country you represent and may be vastly different from your personal opinion - but it is ultimately your creation. But you cannot know how a nation will behave in the future. So what do you do? Look at how they have behaved in the past, what agreements they have signed and, crucially, which they haven't. Google, Press and YouTube Videos may be a decent starting point to get an overview of the topic, but remember that these sources need to generate attention and thus may be biased or sensationalist. Once you have some general knowledge, look for academic releases and articles. They are likely a hard read, but they give you the professional knowledge you require to have an informed discussion. Next, you should look up the home pages of UNOOSA and the space agency (or responsible ministry) of your country. Look for press releases, statements and speeches from conferences. How is your country behaving?

## **Position Paper:**

So, you have done your research and you are now both an expert in the topic and a representative of your country. You're done, right? Wrong. In order to present your delegation's interests well, you are highly recommended to write a position paper. It is essentially what the name suggests: the positions you are entering the discussion with. You may formulate entire statements of approximately one minute (standard speaking time) you can read or just take notes you can use while speaking freely. The most important thing is, that it reflects that you have understood the problem, your country's approach to it and what you would like to see in a resolution. Think of your position paper as a collection of statements that your country would like UNOOSA to say. The resolution we will negotiate is essentially a joint statement of all countries in this committee and your job is to get as many positions of yours in there as possible. Therefore, it is critical that you have a prepared set of concise, convincing positions and arguments to throw into the ring. While you will still have to "wing it" from time to time, having to do so all the time is exhausting and really hard, especially for first-timers. A common mistake among first-timers is trying to cram as much as possible into your statement. Remember, usually you have 1 or 1, 5 minutes to speak; which is shorter than you think. You don't have to say everything at once and you will have ample time to use all your arguments. You should rather focus on one argument and I have found it to be most effective if you apply this basic structure:

1. Claim (Argument): a crisp and short statement - captures the attention of your audience
2. Warrant (Evidence/Proof): explain the factual/logical basis for your argument; keep your language clean and sentences short. People won't be able to follow if you blather.
3. Impact (So What? Why does this matter?): Validates your argument by giving it meaning and relevance. You can for example argue logically, that the sky is blue, but what does that have to do with the peaceful use of space?
4. Repeat claim (if there is time): People have a limited attention span. By repeating your claim, you not only remind people what your statement is about, but also wrap up your statement.

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## Opening Statement:

Every delegate must deliver an opening statement. It is the first speech you give which is often intimidating for inexperienced speakers. A formal conference room full of strangers in suits, all eyes on you and English may not be your first language. Don't worry, you will get a hang of it. However, a common mistake is to just deliver some superficial blathering or - on the other side of the spectrum - jumping right into arguments and technical details. That is not what this part of the discussion is here for. Think of your opening statement as a summary of all the claims (see chapter above) in your position paper. It is intended to give your fellow delegates an idea where you stand, not to educate them on details or bore them with nondescript idealistic pleasantries. This is where you tell people: "This is what we want. This is what you can expect from us.". You go from one claim to another, demonstrating your agenda. Only later, during the actual discussion, you go into each of them one by one. Everybody in the room needs to find allies at some point and opening statements are the first opportunity to see who they are. Again, be concise, to the point and clear. There is a helpful framework here, quite similar to the one mentioned earlier, that you can use in both the opening statement and sometimes later in the discussion:

- Hook: A question, quote, statistic, story, anything that grabs the attention of your audience
- Point: The content of your speech, in this case your central policy positions for the debate
- Action: a call for action; what do you want the committee to do?

## Executive Board Suggestions:

- Focus on The Outer Space Treaty; *more the research, the better.*
- Prepare a Research Binder; *always handy and the go-to if you are stuck.*
- Familiarize yourself with the agendas and the subtopics within; *you will have a better understanding of what is being debated upon.*
- Include your sources; *it is always important to have facts to back you up. Remember you will lose points if you are caught without factual evidence.*
- Know your country's background and foreign policies on the matter at hand; *you never want to tie up with the country's enemy.*

## Further Research:

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- [https://www.unoosa.org/documents/pdf/annualreport/UNOOSA Annual Report 2019.pdf](https://www.unoosa.org/documents/pdf/annualreport/UNOOSA%20Annual%20Report%202019.pdf)
- <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspacetreaty.html>
- <https://www.unoosa.org/>
- <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/spaceobjectregister/index.html>
- <https://bestdelegate.com/a-formula-for-the-perfect-position-paper-solution-oriented-research/>
- <https://bestdelegate.com/how-to-write-a-winning-position-paper/>
- <https://bestdelegate.com/how-to-write-a-position-paper-part-1-topic-background/>

