



AMMAN ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2026

United Nations Office on Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)



Addressing International Disputes Over Lunar Resource
Extraction Following the Artemis Accords
In 2020

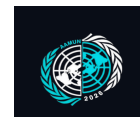


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Dear Delegates,

Regarding the use of ChatGPT in AAMUN'26, we will allow its usage as a **research engine only**. Please be aware that it was last updated on **June 2026**. Therefore, there is a high probability that it will provide you with incorrect information about the topic. If used, we encourage you to fact check the information to prevent any issues throughout the debate.



Committee

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is the UN body responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, it helps nations use space science for sustainable development. The office assists member nations in building domestic legal frameworks aligned with international space law and maintains the official UN Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space to ensure orbital transparency. Operationally, UNOOSA manages capacity-building initiatives like the "Access to Space for All" program to help developing nations harness space tech, coordinates emergency satellite imagery for global disaster management through UN-SPIDER, and drives policy to tackle modern orbital challenges like space debris and traffic management.



General Overview

The extraction of resources from the Moon has become an increasingly important international issue as more countries develop plans for lunar exploration. Resources such as water ice, minerals, and metals could be used to produce fuel, support astronauts, and establish permanent lunar bases. However, the growing value of these resources has raised difficult questions about who has the right to extract them and how access to valuable areas of the Moon should be managed.

In 2020, the United States introduced the Artemis Accords to establish principles for peaceful and cooperative space exploration. The Accords support the extraction and use of lunar resources and propose temporary “safety zones” to prevent interference between missions. Although many countries have signed the Accords, China, Russia, and other states have expressed concerns that rules developed outside the United Nations could give certain countries greater influence over lunar activities. Critics also fear that safety zones could indirectly restrict access to strategically valuable locations.

Existing international space law does not provide a complete solution to these disagreements. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty prohibits countries from claiming sovereignty over the Moon, but it does not clearly explain whether states or private companies may own resources after extracting them. Following the Artemis Accords, the United Nations established the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities to develop



internationally accepted principles. However, no universal and legally binding framework for lunar resource extraction has yet been adopted

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) needs to address this issue by promoting international cooperation while supporting the establishment of clear and lasting regulations for lunar resource extraction. The discussion enables delegates to develop a fair international framework that prevents disputes, protects equal access to lunar resources, and ensures that future activities on the Moon remain peaceful, responsible, and beneficial to all humanity.



Timeline of Events

October 2020: The Artemis Accords are introduced. Russia and China strongly criticize the framework, arguing it bypasses the United Nations and violates the spirit of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty by greenlighting unilateral resource claims

2021–2022: Diplomatic polarization deepens as major powers split. Russia labels U.S. space mining rules "total disrespect for international law", while nations like France and Saudi Arabia join the Accords, causing internal stress for countries trying to balance old UN frameworks with new U.S.-led norms.

January 2024: Saudi Arabia officially withdraws from the 1979 Moon Agreement, highlighting a direct legal pivot away from traditional "global commons" treaties toward the commercial mining permissions favored by the Artemis Accords.

2024-2025: Dual lunar infrastructure plans (Artemis vs. ILRS) prompt friction over "safety zones" buffer areas designated to prevent interference. Critics and non-signatories argue these zones act as territorial land grabs that could legally block rivals from prime lunar south pole water-ice sites

Late 2024–2026: Membership in the Artemis Accords grows past 65 nations. Diplomatic friction shifts toward practical deconfliction challenges as outlier nations negotiate alternative landing corridors, raising urgent calls within the UN for formal multilateral rules on celestial mining.



Major Parties Involved

United States: Creator of the Artemis Accords and leader of the Artemis programme.

China: Leads an alternative lunar programme and opposes rules being shaped mainly by the United States.

Russia: China's main partner in the International Lunar Research Station and a major critic of the Artemis Accords.

India: An Artemis signatory and major lunar power with successful Chandrayaan missions.

Japan: A leading Artemis partner with lunar missions and national legislation permitting ownership of extracted space resources.



Previous Efforts

1. Japan's Space Resources Act:

In 2021, Japan introduced its Space Resources Act, allowing Japanese companies to own resources they legally extract from space. The law was intended to give private companies greater legal certainty. However, it also raised concerns that countries were creating their own regulations before the international community had agreed on a universal framework.

2. Artemis Accords Signatory Meetings

Beginning in 2022, Artemis Accords signatories started holding meetings to discuss how the Accords should be implemented. These discussions addressed transparency, temporary safety zones, coordination between lunar missions and the prevention of harmful interference. However, countries opposing the Accords, particularly China and Russia, are not represented in this process.

3. Draft UN Principles on Space-Resource Activities — 2025

In 2025, the UN Working Group developed draft recommended principles for space-resource activities. These principles represent progress toward a shared international framework, but they have not become legally binding. Major disagreements concerning ownership, safety zones, access to strategic lunar locations and benefit-sharing therefore remain unresolved.



4. UN Working Group on Space Resources

In 2021, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space established the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, which began its formal work in 2022. The group examines issues such as resource ownership, environmental protection, benefit-sharing, international cooperation and dispute prevention. Both Artemis signatories and non-signatories can participate in its work.



Glossary

Lunar: of, or relating to, the Moon.

Artemis Accords: the Artemis Accords are a set of non-binding international principles established in 2020 by NASA and the U.S. State Department alongside founding nations.

Treaty: A treaty is a formal, legally binding written agreement between sovereign states or international organizations under international law

Diplomatic polarization: Diplomatic polarization is the deep division of countries into rigid, opposing ideological or political blocs

Celestial mining: the process of extracting raw materials like water ice, precious metals, and minerals from the Moon, Mars, and near-Earth asteroids

Safety zones: designated areas established around landing sites, bases, or resource extraction operations to prevent harmful interference, collisions, and dust contamination



Useful Links

<https://www.nasa.gov/artemis-accords/>

https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspace_treaty.html

<https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/lsc/space-resources/index.html>

[https://www.unoosa.org/documents/pdf/copuos/lsc/space-resources/Updated Initial draft set of recommended principles 15 October 2025.pdf](https://www.unoosa.org/documents/pdf/copuos/lsc/space-resources/Updated%20Initial%20draft%20set%20of%20recommended%20principles%2015%20October%202025.pdf)

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