



NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HIKINA WHAKATUTUKI



19 May 2016

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Minister for Economic Development

For action by 25 May 2016
For action by 25 May 2016

Membership of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

SUBMISSION Issue

PURPOSE To seek your agreement that New Zealand apply to join the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Recommended referrals

Contact details

| NAME | ROLE | DIVISION | WORK PHONE | MOBILE PHONE |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| Lucy Duncan | Deputy Secretary | Multilateral and Legal Affairs Group, MFAT | s 9(2)(a) | |
| Heath Fisher | Divisional Manager | International Security and Disarmament Division, MFAT | | |
| Katherine MacNeill | Manager | International Strategy MBIE | | |

Minister's Office comments

Signed / Referred

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Key points

- The development of a space launch industry in New Zealand means that it is in our interests to engage more comprehensively on space issues internationally.
- The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is the primary inter-governmental forum on space issues.
- Joining COPUOS and engaging in relevant issues through its processes will allow New Zealand to engage on and influence international developments on relevant space issues.
- Membership of COPUOS does not involve becoming party to any new international treaty. There are no separate and specific fees for COPUOS members. There are no particular obligations on committee members, apart from taking part in the deliberations of COPUOS and its subcommittees. We do not expect any Ministerial meeting commitments to result from COPUOS membership.
- There appears to be a small window of opportunity for New Zealand to join COPUOS. s 6(a)
s 6(a)
- It is proposed that New Zealand should apply to join COPUOS in advance of the 2016 annual COPUOS session which will be held on 8-17 June.

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|--|----------|
| 1 | Note that joining the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would allow New Zealand to engage more comprehensively on and influence international developments on relevant space issues. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Note that membership of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is not expected to incur significant additional obligations or costs on New Zealand. | Yes / No |
| 3 | Agree that New Zealand should apply to join the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. | Yes / No |



Lucy Duncan
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Katherine MacNeill
International Strategy, MBIE

Report

Background

1. A space launch industry is being developed in New Zealand, spearheaded by the efforts of Rocket Lab – a US firm with a New Zealand subsidiary – which intends to begin test launches from the Mahia Peninsula later this year.
2. In April 2016, Cabinet agreed that MBIE (the lead space policy agency), jointly with MFAT, would develop and maintain New Zealand's international relationships and international obligations for space (EGI-16-Min-0051).

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

3. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was established by the UN General Assembly as a permanent body in 1959. It is the primary inter-governmental forum on space issues such as the maintenance of space for peaceful purposes, the application of international law in space, management of space debris and international cooperation on space activities.
4. COPUOS has a mandate to strengthen the international legal regime governing outer space, and to foster the conditions for expanding international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. It also supports national, regional and global efforts to maximise the benefits of the use of outer space science and technology. COPUOS administers five international space treaties, of which New Zealand is already party to three and is currently considering acceding to a fourth.
5. COPUOS currently has 77 members including all our five eyes partners, China, Japan, Russia, India, and Brazil. The Committee is administered by the UN Office on Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

Benefits for New Zealand

6. New Zealand has not previously engaged in any detail in international forums on space issues. For New Zealand to influence international developments on space issues, and develop and maintain a reputation as a responsible actor on space issues, increased international engagement will be required.
7. Joining COPUOS and engaging in relevant issues through its processes would allow New Zealand to engage on and influence international developments on relevant space issues. It would also help New Zealand to develop and maintain a reputation as a responsible actor in space.
8. In particular, emerging issues that are expected to be considered by COPUOS in the near future include how relevant international law obligations that were developed at a time when space activities were mostly conducted directly by States, should apply to commercial space launches and payloads operators. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

s 9(2)(f)(iv)

9. Membership of COPUOS does not involve becoming party to any new international treaty. While there is no formal link between committee membership and ratification of the five space treaties, New Zealand already being party to three of the treaties will help to demonstrate our commitment to space-related issues.
10. There are no separate and specific fees for COPUOS members; full Committee services are covered by the UN Regular Budget. There are no particular obligations on committee members, apart from taking part in the deliberations of COPUOS and its subcommittees, as appropriate.
11. There are three primary COPUOS meetings in Vienna per year, plus occasional informal meetings. MFAT's post in Vienna would provide primary support and attendance at relevant meetings, with attendance also expected from Wellington-based MFAT and/or MBIE officials as necessary. We do not expect any Ministerial meeting commitments to result from COPUOS membership.

Membership application process

12. Applications to join COPUOS are made by *note verbale*. Applications are considered at the annual committee meeting, which makes a recommendation on the application to the General Assembly.

s 6(a)

s 6(a)