



## One Moon for All

On June 18, 2024, a reception under the theme "Embrace the Moon and Move Forward Together" was held at the United Nations Vienna International Center (VIC). It was hosted by the Permanent Mission of China in Vienna, the China National Space Administration (CNSA), the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) with its Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

The event was attended by representatives of the delegations that took part in the first UN Conference on the Sustainable Use of the Moon and the 67th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Also present were His Excellency Ambassador Li Song, China's representative to the United Nations in Vienna and other international organizations, Li Guoping, the chief engineer of the Chinese National Space Administration, the Director of UNOOSA, as well as astronauts from China, Russia, the USA and Romania and over 400 other guests, including diplomatic representatives from various countries in Vienna.

In his speech, Ambassador Li Song emphasized that the Moon and space are common ground for humanity and that the exploration of the moon has always been a dream of all nations. The peaceful use of space is a common concern of humanity.

The UN Conference on Sustainable Use of the Moon, which is themed "Our Common Moon," is perfectly in line with China's concept of creating a community with a shared future for mankind. He said that great endeavors begin with bold dreams and can be realized through effort and cooperation. 2024 will mark the 20th anniversary of China's lunar program. In these 20 years, Chinese space engineers have made remarkable progress through the spirit of lunar exploration characterized by realizing dreams, courage to explore, joint effort and cooperation.

Li Guoping, chief engineer of the Chinese National Space Administration, stressed that China is willing to cooperate with all countries in capacity building, project implementation, results utilization, personnel exchange and space administration to deepen friendship in the space sector and better utilize space technology to explore the universe, protect the earth and benefit human civilization.

As of January 2025, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) comprises 104 member states. Established in 1959 with 24 members, COPUOS has expanded over the decades to become one of the largest committees within the United Nations. UNOOSA provides the governance and secretariat services to COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, which continue to serve as a unique platform for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes at the international level. [1].

The above Conference took place before the Donald Trump was elected as the 47th President of the United States of America. With his rigorous ideas about "Make America Great Again" I was wondering how the Chinese declarations on a sustainable "Moon for All" approach supported by UNOOSA efforts could be continued.

With the help of chatGPT, I researched possible impacts on UNOOSA activities using available references in the internet.

Here is chatGPT's analysis, it might give you a flavor of the challenges and chances we might expect in the next four years.

## ChatGPT

The impact of President Donald Trump's policies and actions on the future role of the United Nations

Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) can be assessed through various lenses, including his administration's approach to space governance, international collaboration, and U.S. leadership in space.

## **1. Space Prioritization and Policy Shifts**

The Trump administration placed a strong emphasis on space as a strategic domain, evident through the establishment of the U.S. Space Force and the reinvigoration of the National Space Council [2]. These actions underscored the importance of space for national security, economic growth, and scientific advancement. However, this focus was often framed in terms of competition, particularly with China and Russia, rather than as an opportunity for international cooperation.

While UNOOSA is primarily concerned with fostering international collaboration, the Trump administration's preference for bilateral agreements (e.g., the Artemis Accords) over multilateral frameworks potentially sidelined broader UN efforts. By prioritizing agreements that align with U.S. interests, the administration may have set a precedent for other nations to pursue similar bilateral or regional arrangements, reducing the centrality of UNOOSA in global space governance.

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## **2. Artemis Accords and Space Resource Utilization**

The Artemis Accords, introduced under Trump, emphasized principles for responsible space exploration, such as transparency and interoperability, while also supporting the commercial extraction of space resources\*). This marked a significant departure from the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, which UNOOSA helps oversee, and which asserts that outer space is the "province of all humankind." [3]

*\*) In April 2020, President Trump issued an executive order re-confirming the U.S. view that space is not a "global commons" and that U.S. policy encourages "international support for the public and private recovery and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law." [4]*

By championing resource utilization, the Trump administration challenged longstanding norms about the non-appropriation of celestial bodies. This policy shift could either encourage UNOOSA to modernize its frameworks to accommodate new realities or undermine its authority if countries bypass UN mechanisms altogether.

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## **3. Impact on International Collaboration**

While the Trump administration's space policies advanced U.S. leadership in space, they also emphasized national interests and partnerships with like-minded nations. This stance created a potential rift in the international space community, as countries such as Russia and China were excluded from key initiatives.

UNOOSA, as a UN body, thrives on inclusivity and multilateralism. The administration's approach may have weakened the perception of UNOOSA as the primary forum for space cooperation, encouraging polarization within the space community.

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## **4. Legacy and Future Role of UNOOSA**

The Trump administration's actions have set a complex stage for UNOOSA's future:

- **Challenges:** UNOOSA may face diminished relevance if nations increasingly prioritize bilateral agreements over multilateral frameworks.
- **Opportunities:** The rapid growth of space activities and the emergence of private sector actors present an opportunity for UNOOSA to assert its role as a mediator, standard-setter, and capacity-builder, especially for emerging spacefaring nations.

UNOOSA could adapt to these changes by advocating for updated treaties, addressing issues like space resource utilization and space traffic management, and emphasizing the importance of sustainability and equity in space exploration.

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## Conclusion

President Trump's space policies emphasized national interests, competition, and bilateralism, creating challenges for UNOOSA's multilateral framework. However, these shifts also highlight the need for a more dynamic and proactive UNOOSA that can navigate the evolving landscape of space governance. The organization's future relevance will depend on its ability to modernize its approach and build consensus in an increasingly fragmented space community.

## References:

- [1] UNOOSA [https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/members/index.html?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/members/index.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- [2] [https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/articles/president-trump-issues-executive-order-reviving-national-space-council/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/articles/president-trump-issues-executive-order-reviving-national-space-council/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- [3] Info: Artemis Accords <https://www.nasa.gov/artemis-accords/>
- [4] <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-encouraging-international-support-recovery-use-space-resources/>