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THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

SAN ROBERTO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL
Committee: The United Nations General Assembly (GA)

Topic A: The Equal Access to Space Exploration

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I. Committee Background

The International Atomic Energy Agency, also called the Atoms for Peace Agency or abbreviated as IAEA, was established in 1957 to promote the peaceful use and safety of atomic energy or nuclear power. The IAEA’s headquarters are located in Vienna, Austria, however, it has various regional offices located in Geneva, New York, Toronto, and Tokyo. The Atoms for Peace Agency’s Director General is Yukiya Amano, who has presided over the organization since July 2009. As an independent international organization related to the United Nations’ system, the IAEA’s relationship with the UN is regulated by a special agreement, with the purpose of the recognition of IAEA’S autonomy regarding the subject of peaceful uses of atomic technology. This international organization has three main areas it works on, which are: nuclear technology and applications, nuclear safety and security, and safeguards and verifications. The agency is currently overlooking security procedures in nuclear accidents of Chernobyl in Ukraine and Fukushima in Japan. The IAEA today continues to monitor the nuclear programmes in Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).
II. Topic information

A) History of Topic

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, space exploration is an “investigation, by means of manned and unmanned spacecraft, of the reaches of the universe beyond Earth’s atmosphere and the use of the information gained to increase knowledge of the cosmos and benefit humanity”. Through the years, this type of investigation has greatly improved, yet, very few countries are able to afford and undertake activities such as this one. Since space exploration helps governments upgrade their technology, many desire to have their own national space agency and in the future, be able to support human spaceflight, but this harder than most people think.

After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union created their own missile programs. Shortly afterwards, the Cold War began between the two nations and so did the “Space Race,” which was a competition between both states. In 1957, the Soviets launched their first satellite into space. The United States sent into orbit their first satellite in 1958, and after three years, Alan Shepard became the first American to fly into space. President John F. Kennedy set the goal of “landing a man on the moon and returning him safe to Earth” and nine years later, on July 20, 1969, Astronaut Neil Armstrong achieved the goal and stepped on the moon; “that’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”. Due to his “heroic act”, Neil Armstrong and the United States raised the expectations within space exploration.
Afterwards, the Soviet Union and the United States continued launching spacecraft to photograph the moon, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn between 1969 and 1972. On July 17, 1975, a joint mission sent three American astronauts and two Russian cosmonauts into space. This broke barriers between both countries and facilitated cooperation on future missions. To break the cultural and language barriers these two nations had, both crews had to speak the other language, and eventually were able to complete their missions. Fifteen years later, the Cold War officially ended and the Soviet Union along with the United States began to formally collaborate, eventually creating the International Space Station (ISS).

Referring back to the prior paragraphs, it is clear that the United States of America and Russia have been two of the main countries that have constantly participated in space exploration. Nowadays, there are 70 official governmental space agencies, but only thirteen countries have launch capability, of those, just three; the USA, Russia and China, are capable of human spaceflight, becoming the most advanced in the area. Lack of funding, experience and knowledge are three reasons for why many countries do not have their own space agencies and do not collaborate in the International Space Agency.

Along the three main leaders in space exploration, India and Japan have shown interest in expanding their capability within their space agencies, such as developing manned aircraft. Their economic progress in the past years has promoted research and has made it more likely for them to achieve their goal in the near future. There are many missions programmed for the upcoming years, but they are most likely to be done by countries that have already launched satellites and manned aircraft.
Unfortunately, for many countries around the world, the idea of having a space agency to say the least is still just that, an idea. This is because in order to have one, the countries would have to develop research facilities, test facilities, construction and launch facilities, tracking and control facilities, and human development units. However, there must be equal access to space exploration since all states have the same rights to explore outer space and pursue responsible activities that continuously help space exploration and technology grow.

B) Current Issues

Switzerland:
Switzerland has been involved in the space program from its early days and currently it is looking for a place in the European Space Agency (ESA) strategy to promote their interests for the improvement of space exploration. In 2013, the CHaracterizing ExOPlanets Satellite (CHEOPS) won a competition for a new class of small missions. To demonstrate their space capabilities, Switzerland assumed the leading role on this mission and it is scheduled to be launched by the end of 2017. The CHEOPS will be able to determine the measurements and composition of exoplanets.

Thailand:
Thailand’s participation in outer space officially began in 1996, and one year later, 11 engineers sent the first Thai micro-satellite, named THAIPAT-1, to the sun’s orbit. Since then, they have continued launching several other satellites with the purpose of observing Earth. Although
space exploration is mainly limited to the government, young citizens from Thailand have demonstrated their interest in this area. “Thailand Near Space Research Group”, a group of students from a Thai university, launched the first high altitude balloon with sensors and tracking devices in order to study the higher atmosphere. Thailand’s current goal is to venture into space technology manufacturing.

South Korea:

To achieve South Korea’s goal of becoming a major space power, it has sent the Korean Multipurpose Satellite-3A (Arirang-3A) into space. The successful launch of Arirang-3A has shown the capabilities of private companies to work hand-in-hand with governmental agencies such as the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI), which has created previous satellites. KARI set the goal of developing a Korean-made launch vehicle as well as improving South Korea’s ability to make good use of the information gathered by satellites. The project to develop has just entered its second stage earlier in 2016. The South Korean government has decided to invest about 2 trillion US dollars between 2010 and 2021 into its space programs.

Norway:

In 1962, Andøya, the first rocket created by Norway, was launched. After the successful launch, the country established a national space law, which specifies that anyone launching an object into outer space from Norwegian territory requires permission from the Minister of Trade and Industry. The Norwegian Space Centre (NSC) was founded in 1987, and later it became part of the European Space Agency (ESA). Over the years, Norway has made significant contributions to improve space exploration and science and engineering careers. Nowadays, Norway is one of the
best places for space technology applications due to their climate and land. Since 2003, the ROMFORSKNING programme had focused on improving the knowledge about outer space by increasing the understanding of processes and developing new technological tools.

Sweden:

The Swedish National Space Board (SNSB) is in charge of all the national and international activities relating to space. They are focused on promoting the use of space for public applications, such as climate, transportation, and the environment. Also, the Swedish government wants to improve the space industry and the institutions in the country. Additionally, SNSB has been working to form relationships with other active countries in space exploration and therefore create a network of several contributing members to share advancements in technology.

Austria:

The Austrian Space Application Programme (ASAP) was initiated in 2002 by the Federal Ministry of Innovation and Technology. To achieve the target that ASAP is focused on, which is the research of space science and technology advancements, Austrian and international scientists are promoting space science in the country by researching exploration projects and developing new space instruments. Austria decided to have an active role in space activities, and as a result, has created many employment opportunities. Its involvement in mandatory and optional programmes has made Austria a recognised partner in space exploration, which other countries want to collaborate in.
C) UN Actions

Within the United Nations, there is an office called The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) which was founded on December 13th, 1958. For 57 years, this office has been working to help countries conduct space activities and strengthen the capacity of developing countries to use space science technology. Additionally, it promotes international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of space, and the use of space science and technology for sustainable economic and social development. UNOOSA firmly believes that the benefits gathered from space exploration should be shared and that it could greatly help countries progress.

III. Conclusion

Several countries have been participating in space exploration for many years now. Russia and the United States are two of the most active nations. Moreover, many others have already begun working towards the creation of their agency or launching facilities. However, it requires a lot of resources in order to have a productive station that could eventually provide a country with progressive information regarding technology and science. Another essential point is the United Nation’s participation in the issue. UNOOSA has been working since 1958 to promote peaceful space participation between countries and has guided countries on how to safely conduct space activities. Due to the amount of resources needed for all countries to have equal access in space exploration, the world might need to wait for several decades to see all nations equally participating.
IV. Essential Questions

1. Does your delegation have a space agency? Why or why not?
2. How much money from your delegation’s budget is directed toward space technology?
3. Do universities in your country support space exploration?
4. Since when has your delegation shown interest in conducting space exploration related activities?
5. If your delegation has a space agency, does it have launch ability?
6. Is your country collaborating with other countries to improve current space technology?
7. How can your delegation help other countries get involved in space exploration?
8. If your delegation is currently involved in space missions, what are the purposes of these missions?

V. Resources


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"SPACE SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, EQUAL ACCESS TO SPACE-BASED TECHNOLOGIES, WARNINGS ABOUT OUTER SPACE ARMS RACE DOMINATE DEBATE IN
"Embracing our diversity is the first step to unity."


