

## **COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (COPUOS): SPACE DEBRIS MITIGATION GUIDELINES**

### **International mechanism:**

Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 62/217 of 22 December 2007.

### **Description:**

The Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee are the result of more than a decade of work undertaken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC). After extensive preparatory work by the STSC Working Group on Space Debris, the Guidelines were adopted by the STSC at its 44<sup>th</sup> session in 2007 (A/AC.105/890, para.99), endorsed by the Committee at its 50<sup>th</sup> session in 2007 (A/62/20, paras. 118 and 119) and subsequently submitted to the General Assembly at its session in 2007.

As agreed by the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 62/217 of 22 December 2007, the Guidelines reflect the existing practices as developed by a number of national and international organizations. From a technical point of view, the guidelines are applicable to mission planning and the operation of newly designed spacecraft and orbital stages and, if possible, to existing ones. There is a total of seven guidelines: a) to limit debris released during nominal [spacecraft / orbital stages] operations, b) to minimize the potential for break-ups during operational phases, c) to limit the probability of accidental collision in orbit, d) to avoid intentional destruction and other harmful activities, e) to minimize the potential for post-mission break-ups resulting from stored energy, and f) / g) to limit the long-term presence of spacecraft and launch vehicle orbital stages in the low-Earth orbit (LEO) region / geosynchronous Earth orbit (GEO) region after the end of their mission.

The Guidelines are meant to be reviewed and revised in the future as necessary.

### **Applicability:**

The Guidelines are not legally binding under public international law. Through resolution 62/217, the United Nations General Assembly invited Member States of the United Nations to implement those voluntary guidelines through relevant national mechanisms “to the greatest extent feasible”, through space debris mitigation practices and procedures.

### **Relation to international mechanisms:**

The Guidelines are based on the technical content and the basic definitions of the IADC Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines, and taking into consideration the United Nations treaties and principles on outer space.

### **References:**

- [www.unoosa.org](http://www.unoosa.org)