Report of the Global Conference on

Resource Mining in the Outer Space: Artemis Accords and Beyond



Expanding its joint endeavours, the Centre of Aviation and Space Laws (NUJS Kolkata) organised a global conference in collaboration with the Center for Air and Space Law (University of Mississippi School of Law) and the Centre for Research in Air and Space Law (MNLU Mumbai). This Conference was organised on 14 October 2023 with the central theme of 'Resource Mining in the Outer Space: Artemis Accords and Beyond'. This event, being truly global, witnessed participation of resource persons and audience across the continents.

The event started with the welcome addresses delivered by the Vice Chancellors of two distinguished national law universities. Michelle Hanlon, Executive Director of the Center for Air and Space Law, University of Mississippi School of Law delivered the keynote address on 'Section 9 of the Artemis Accords: The Starting Point'. Prof. Sandeepa Bhat B., Director of CASL, critically evaluated the legality of Artemis Accords by pointing out its conflict with key

principles enshrined under the UN space treaties. His presentation provided a perfect platform for further discourse on different nuances of the Artemis Accords.

The second panel started with Dr. Asha Soman speaking on the interplay between the Artemis Accords, the Moon Agreement and the Registration Convention. She critiqued the Artemis Accords from the perspective of protection of space environment. Speaking next, Dr. Ashima Jain and Gaurav Sharma discussed on the point of sustainable space exploration. Tushar Sharma presented his paper on the Artemis Accords and India to highlight the implications of India signing the Artemis Accords. Dr. Rossana Deplano, Co-Director of the Centre for European Law and Internationalisation, spoke on 'Artemis Accords in the Current International Law Framework'. Prof. Steven Freeland, Vice-Chair - United Nations COPUOS Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, ended this session by unfolding his vast experiences of working in the COPUOS Working Group. His in-depth analysis of current developments enriched every participant.

The first speaker of the third panel was Prof. Bruce Gagnon, Co-Founder of the Global Network against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space. He critically evaluated the Artemis Accords by stating that it might lead to the tragedy of Gold Rush era. He also viewed it as a pathway to benefit select few. This was followed by Anil Akyol and Zgi Bicer's presentation on 'Reviewing Principle 11 of the Artemis Accords'. Prof. Frans G. von der Dunk, Professor of Space Law, University of Nebraska, spoke on the legal considerations of celestial body resource exploitation via Artemis Accords. Prof. Kai-Uwe Schroghl, President, International Institute of Space Law, Paris & Director of the European Space Policy Institute, Vienna, spoke on legal and policy aspects of the Artemis Accords. Both Prof. Dunk and Prof. Kai-Uwe unveiled different legal dimensions of celestial resource exploitation in best possible ways.

Panel four started with Mohd. Sikandar presenting his paper on Indian approach to the Artemis Accords and the way forward. Dr. Divya Tyagi, Head, VS Mani Centre for Air and Space Law, GNLU, presented his paper focusing on the emerging challenges posed by space resource mining. This was followed by Aaditya Vikram Sharma's discourse on the possibility of India leading the way of Global South in connection with celestial resource exploitation. As a final presentation of this session, Dr. Sudhir Verma and Tanvi Anand spoke on the need for space sustainability from the international investment law perspective.

The last panel started with a unique insight on Artemis Accords from a TWAIL perspective, which was presented by Adithya Variath, Coordinator - CRASL. Outlining the strong root of TWAIL in the making of space law, he highlighted the areas concerns in Artemis Accords. The next speaker, Dr. Deva Prasad, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode, gave his views on the Artemis Accords from the Indian perspective. The last three speakers, Ajay Tambulkar, Sajal Sharma and Pranav Satyanath spoke on the ambit of space mining from legal perspective, building of new international space norms and Indian position relating to space mining respectively.

The success of this global conference is evident from the scholarship of resource persons and paper presenters as well as the participation of audience from different continents. With more than 100 participants hearing the views of some of the best known space law experts, the conference had immense success. The conference is expected to influence the participants to take positive steps in the direction of protecting the sanctity of common rights' regime of outer space from the onslaught of commercialisation.