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Chamber of
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Because
Business
Matters. Parce que les
affaires sont
importantes.

March 31, 2021

Space Framework Policy Consultations
Canadian Space Agency
6767 Route de l'Aéroport
Saint-Hubert, Quebec
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Via email

RE: CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INITIAL CONTRIBUTION TO 'A FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE SPACE EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES'

In spite of the challenges of the last year – and to help overcome those challenges – the Canadian Chamber of Commerce continues to look towards the future and how the business community can best lead us forward.

Space has become accessible like never before: from digitally connecting our planet in unprecedented ways, to new worlds of resources, to scientific discovery, to vacations that were once science fiction. But getting there requires new ways of thinking, the brightest minds, advanced aerospace development, and a high-tech talent pool like the world has never seen. Canada has the opportunity to continue into the 21st century in the position of leadership our country achieved in space over the past 70 years.

The private sector's role in space exploration has also evolved since the early space programs. Transitioning from roles primarily limited to being contract suppliers into mission leadership or ownership positions exemplifies this change. Ensuring the next generation of space law reflects this current reality – and is equipped to manage its likely acceleration – will be crucial to ensure Canada's and humanity's continued expansion into space is both orderly and fruitful.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce appreciates the CSA's engagement of the business community to gain our perspective. Space exploration presents an exciting opportunity for all people, especially Canadians given our country's longstanding leadership presence in space. The Canadian Chamber is pleased to continue to contribute to this process, and the CSA's activities, as they continue to progress.

Principles to guide the Framework for Space Exploration Activities

Ensure participation is demonstrably advantageous for signatories. There must be a compelling reason why a nation, and its citizens and business/scientific community, should want to be a party to the agreement. If the agreement is unduly burdensome, complicated,

unclear, causes economic harm, or is a barrier to innovative space exploration and utilization, this will likely lead to a scenario where many nations elect not to participate. Widespread acceptance of a common set of rules – even if they aren't perfect – is necessary to enable space utilization to be orderly.

Be open to coalitions of the willing. Despite the past success of UN-based space treaties, it must be remembered that these treaties generally focus on nation-to-nation relationships and government space programs. Moving forward with the next generation of space exploration and next generation space law, it will become increasingly necessary to involve more non-state actors – both in the process of drafting agreements and in their implementation and acceptance.

Encourage entrepreneurial exploration and development. Fuelled primarily by the significant reduction in launch costs, and the widespread availability of supporting technology, the number of people able to access space has never been greater, and this will only continue to expand. The next generation treaty should adopt the perspective that private development and space exploration is positive, in our national interest, and to be encouraged.

Consider public space infrastructure construction and access as a means to incentivise treaty participation and support entrepreneurs. For space exploration, the construction of and access to public infrastructure (e.g. communications systems, launch and landing facilities, etc.) is a key role for government to play. For both public and private space operators, utilizing these facilities would be contingent upon abiding by agreed-upon rules and regulations. In turn, this public infrastructure would help lower mission costs. This is analogous to the way it is in an airline's best interests to follow all Transport Canada regulations to be able to utilize public airports, the public navigation and communications systems, and be allowed to operate in Canada's airspace.

Recognize the need for clearly defined rules around exclusive access. Current treaties are largely based on an underpinning that prevents one actor from 'claiming' part of, or all of, an object in space. As space exploration continues, a key area of focus requiring refined rules for the 21st Century is resource extraction and nascent colonization. Extraction may be for multiple purposes, including scientific discovery, refueling spacecraft, return of precious minerals to Earth, and so on. The next generation treaty should confirm that all these uses are valid and support safe operations by allowing (temporary) dedicated access. There will also be a need to consider how nations may interact with and treat a colony, especially in cases if a colony is the property of a private rather state entity.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce contact

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