



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Stuart Nash	Portfolio	Economic and Regional Development
Title of Cabinet paper	Space Resource Utilisation and the Artemis Accords	Date to be published	30 June 2021

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
May 2021	Space Resource Utilisation and the Artemis Accords	Office of the Minister of Economic and Regional Development Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
3 May 2021	CAB-21-MIN-0145	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

YES

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Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Space Resource Utilisation and the Artemis Accords

Portfolios **Foreign Affairs / Economic and Regional Development**

On 3 May 2021, Cabinet:

Background

- 1 **noted** that the United States has invited New Zealand to join the “Artemis Accords”, a non-binding arrangement intended to provide an international basis for space exploration activities, including space resource utilisation (SRU);
- 2 **noted** that consideration of whether New Zealand should join the Accords has accelerated New Zealand’s development of a high-level policy position on SRU – in particular whether international law is sufficient to effectively regulate such activities;

New Zealand policy on SRU

- 3 **noted** that SRU will enable the next generation of crewed, deep-space exploration, and presents significant benefits to New Zealand;
- 4 **noted** that New Zealand has a key interest in ensuring an effective rules-based system is developed to manage SRU activities;
- 5 **noted** that, while existing international law provides some general rules that would apply to SRU, it has some potentially significant gaps;
- 6 **agreed** to the following elements of New Zealand’s policy position on SRU:
 - 6.1 the basic level of regulation provided by existing international law is not sufficient to regulate SRU in the long term;
 - 6.2 therefore, New Zealand will advocate for multilateral rules, norms or standards in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of SRU, reinforce the peaceful use of outer space and effectively operationalise the existing international rules in the SRU context, which will include:
 - 6.2.1 rules that go beyond the existing international obligation to avoid harmful contamination of outer space and which are focused on ensuring any harmful, long-term impacts resulting from SRU are avoided or limited, and there is a process to understand these impacts;

- 6.2.2 ensuring the sustainable management of space resources;
 - 6.2.3 ensuring SRU does not preclude the long-term use of space resources for others;
 - 6.2.4 ensuring existing international obligations are given effect in a way that ensures transparency and clarity – particularly concerning the interests of and benefits to small countries such as New Zealand;
 - 6.2.5 ensuring certainty of rules for commercial operators, as uncertainty will inhibit investment and development;
- 7 **noted** that the approach in paragraph 6 allows New Zealand to continue to support and participate in the development of SRU activities, while at the same time advocating for the further development of appropriate rules, norms or standards;
- 8 **agreed** that the approach outlined in paragraph 6 underpin New Zealand’s engagement in multilateral and bilateral processes related to SRU;

Artemis Accords

- 9 **noted** that New Zealand membership in the Artemis Accords presents significant long term economic, scientific and relational benefits, as well supporting our ability to influence key space policy discussions;
- 10 **noted** that:
- 10.1 the Accords are non-binding;
 - 10.2 there is nothing in international law that would preclude New Zealand joining the Accords;
 - 10.3 with appropriate messaging, joining the Accords could be consistent with the high level position on SRU proposed above; and
 - 10.4 signatories have acknowledged their comfort that members will have different views on issues raised by the Accords;
- 11 **agreed** that New Zealand join the Artemis Accords;
- 12 **agreed** that New Zealand’s membership in the Artemis Accords will be accompanied by messaging that situates our participation within our wider position on SRU and our approach to space policy issues more generally.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet