**PatMedMUNCXII**

**United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs**

**Privatization of**

**Space Travel**

In 1961, the Soviet Union sent Yuri Gagarin into orbit, making him the first human being to leave Earth and enter the great unknown. The Cold War brought about the technological innovations that allowed the United States to put the first humans on the Moon. Since then, these technologies have only been growing and advancing at a rapid rate. With that has come the creation of private space travel companies, most notably SpaceX and Virgin Galactic. This business has both brought many potential benefits and risks for the human race.

Space privatization has brought many positive effects for the world. For example, the United State’s National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has, since the 2010’s, been working with the private sector. Combined, they have been able to send shuttles into space for much cheaper than ever before. What would have been a $4 billion dollar program can now be done for only $50 million, making space accessible for many more countries. This also means more access to valuable minerals from asteroids and other extraterrestrial objects, meaning greater profits for the countries involved. Also, the possibility for civilian space travel becomes a reality. Virgin Galactic offers 90-minute space flights for $250,000. With the further support and development of this industry, space hospitality and tourism can become an option for future vacations and businesses.

It goes without saying that there’s still many downsides to the privatization of space travel. When a space organization is run by a state government, the interests of the organization come from politicians and tax-payers; keeping it to the people. But, private space companies only have to answer to stock-holders and work to make a profit. Private space companies don’t have the obligation to serve the people that governments do. As a result, many deals made between countries and companies have been unreliable, fallen through, or resulted in both parties dealing with major financial losses.

As the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, it is your job to determine how countries should proceed with business with these private companies. Should we embrace the technology of the future at the risk of financial suffering and corporate greed? As a committee, you need to work together to contain these companies or let them loose in the playpen that is outer space. It is still essential to keep your country’s own priorities in mind while creating resolutions for this topic.

**Points to Consider:**

* Has your country sent anyone to space? If not, do they plan to?
* How does your country regulate private businesses?
* Has your company made any deals with private space travel businesses?
* What private space travel companies are present & active in your country?

**Helpful Links:**

<https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/1619-the-implications-of-the-privatization-of-space>

<https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/NASA_Partnership_Report_LR_20140429.pdf>

<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1705&context=njilb>

<https://www.oakton.edu/students/8/iiliev5728/Final%20Progect/SpaceX.htm>