

No. 9574

MULTILATERAL

Agreement on the rescue of astronauts, the return of astronauts and the return of objects launched into outer space. Opened for signature at Washington, London and Moscow on 22 April 1968

Authentic texts: English, Russian, French, Spanish and Chinese.

Registered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America on 15 May 1969.

MULTILATÉRAL

Accord sur le sauvetage des astronautes, le retour des astronautes et la restitution des objets lancés dans l'espace extra-atmosphérique. Ouvert à la signature à Londres, Moscou et Washington le 22 avril 1968

Textes authentiques: anglais, russe, français, espagnol et chinois.

Enregistré par l'Union des Républiques socialistes soviétiques, le Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord et les États-Unis d'Amérique le 15 mai 1969.

AGREEMENT¹ ON THE RESCUE OF ASTRONAUTS, THE RETURN OF ASTRONAUTS AND THE RETURN OF OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE

The Contracting Parties,

Noting the great importance of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including

¹ Came into force on 3 December 1968, the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by five Governments including the Governments designated as Depositary Governments under paragraph 2 of article 7, i.e., the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, in accordance with paragraph 3 of the same article.

Instruments of ratification or accession (a) were deposited on the dates indicated as follows:

	<i>With the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</i>		<i>With the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</i>		<i>With the Government of the United States of America</i>	
Argentina	26 March	1969	26 March	1969	26 March	1969
Barbados	—	—	20 February	1969 a	—	—
Botswana	10 April	1969 a	18 April	1969 a	18 April	1969 a
Bulgaria	2 April	1969	16 April	1969	16 April	1969
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	2 December	1968	—	—	—	—
Cameroon	—	—	10 January	1969	—	—
Czechoslovakia	18 February	1969	18 February	1969	18 February	1969
Denmark	6 May	1969	6 May	1969	6 May	1969
Ecuador	—	—	—	—	7 March	1969
Gabon	—	—	—	—	2 April	1969 a
Gambia	26 July	1968 a	2 August	1968 a	—	—
German Democratic Republic	11 December	1968	—	—	—	—
Ireland	—	—	29 August	1968	6 September	1968
Lebanon	31 March	1969	31 March	1969	—	—
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	11 February	1969
Mauritius	13 May	1969 a	21 April	1969 a	16 April	1969 a
Mexico	11 March	1969	11 March	1969	11 March	1969
Mongolia	31 January	1969	—	—	—	—
Nepal	26 July	1968	3 February	1969	11 July	1968
Niger	—	—	—	—	15 January	1969
Poland	14 February	1969	14 February	1969	14 February	1969
Republic of Korea	—	—	—	—	4 April	1969 *
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	16 January	1969	—	—	—	—
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	3 December	1968	3 December	1968	3 December	1968
United Arab Republic	11 December	1968	—	—	—	—
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3 December	1968	3 December	1968 **	3 December	1968 **
United States of America	3 December	1968	3 December	1968	3 December	1968
Uruguay	—	—	25 February	1969	—	—

* With a declaration made on signature and on deposit of the instrument of ratification that the signing and ratification by the Government of the Republic of Korea of the Agreement does not in any way mean or imply the recognition of any territory or regime which has not been recognized by the Government of the Republic of Korea as a State or Government.

** The Agreement is ratified in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Associated States (Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla and Saint Lucia) and Territories under

the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies¹, which calls for the rendering of all possible assistance to astronauts in the event of accident, distress or emergency landing, the prompt and safe return of astronauts, and the return of objects launched into outer space,

Desiring to develop and give further concrete expression to these duties,

Wishing to promote international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space,

Prompted by sentiments of humanity,

Have agreed on the following:

Article 1

Each Contracting Party which receives information or discovers that the personnel of a spacecraft have suffered accident or are experiencing conditions of distress or have made an emergency or unintended landing in territory under its jurisdiction or on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State shall immediately:

- (a) notify the launching authority or, if it cannot identify and immediately communicate with the launching authority, immediately make a public announcement by all appropriate means of communication at its disposal;
- (b) notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who should disseminate the information without delay by all appropriate means of communication at his disposal.

Article 2

If, owing to accident, distress, emergency or unintended landing, the personnel of a spacecraft land in territory under the jurisdiction of a Contracting Party, it shall immediately take all possible steps to rescue them and render them all necessary assistance. It shall inform the launching authority and also the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the steps it is taking and of their progress. If assistance by the launching authority would help to

the territorial sovereignty of the United Kingdom, as well as the State of Brunei, the Kingdom of Tonga and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.

The Government of the United Kingdom declared upon deposit of the instrument that the provisions of the Agreement shall not apply in regard to Southern Rhodesia unless and until the Government of the United Kingdom informs the other depositary Governments that it is in a position to ensure that the obligations imposed by the Agreement in respect of that territory can be fully implemented.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Vol. 610, p. 205.

effect a prompt rescue or would contribute substantially to the effectiveness of search and rescue operations, the launching authority shall co-operate with the Contracting Party with a view to the effective conduct of search and rescue operations. Such operations shall be subject to the direction and control of the Contracting Party, which shall act in close and continuing consultation with the launching authority.

Article 3

If information is received or it is discovered that the personnel of a spacecraft have alighted on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State, those Contracting Parties which are in a position to do so shall, if necessary, extend assistance in search and rescue operations for such personnel to assure their speedy rescue. They shall inform the launching authority and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the steps they are taking and of their progress.

Article 4

If, owing to accident, distress, emergency or unintended landing, the personnel of a spacecraft land in territory under the jurisdiction of a Contracting Party or have been found on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State, they shall be safely and promptly returned to representatives of the launching authority.

Article 5

1. Each Contracting Party which receives information or discovers that a space object or its component parts has returned to Earth in territory under its jurisdiction or on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State, shall notify the launching authority and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

2. Each Contracting Party having jurisdiction over the territory on which a space object or its component parts has been discovered shall, upon the request of the launching authority and with assistance from that authority if requested, take such steps as it finds practicable to recover the object or component parts.

3. Upon request of the launching authority, objects launched into outer space or their component parts found beyond the territorial limits of the launching authority shall be returned to or held at the disposal of representatives of the launching authority, which shall, upon request, furnish identifying data prior to their return.

4. Notwithstanding paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article, a Contracting Party which has reason to believe that a space object or its component parts discovered in territory under its jurisdiction, or recovered by it elsewhere, is of a hazardous or deleterious nature may so notify the launching authority, which shall immediately take effective steps, under the direction and control of the said Contracting Party, to eliminate possible danger of harm.

5. Expenses incurred in fulfilling obligations to recover and return a space object or its component parts under paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article shall be borne by the launching authority.

Article 6

For the purposes of this Agreement, the term “launching authority” shall refer to the State responsible for launching, or, where an international inter-governmental organization is responsible for launching, that organization, provided that that organization declares its acceptance of the rights and obligations provided for in this Agreement and a majority of the States members of that organization are Contracting Parties to this Agreement and to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Article 7

1. This Agreement shall be open to all States for signature. Any State which does not sign this Agreement before its entry into force in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article may accede to it at any time.

2. This Agreement shall be subject to ratification by signatory States. Instruments of ratification and instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, which are hereby designated the Depositary Governments.

3. This Agreement shall enter into force upon the deposit of instruments of ratification by five Governments including the Governments designated as Depositary Governments under this Agreement.

4. For States whose instruments of ratification or accession are deposited subsequent to the entry into force of this Agreement, it shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of their instruments of ratification or accession.

5. The Depositary Governments shall promptly inform all signatory and acceding States of the date of each signature, the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification of and accession to this Agreement, the date of its entry into force and other notices.