

THE WASHINGTON COMPACT ON NORMS OF BEHAVIOR
FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE OPERATIONS

Government and commercial investment in the new global space economy is accelerating rapidly; however, national, and international governance structures are unable to keep pace. This has created a level of uncertainty for the commercial sector that makes it difficult to make informed decisions on long-term financing of new and innovative transnational ventures. Inaction or bad decisions by governments and international institutions distorts the invest calculus which becomes a brake on innovation and capital development.

The Hague Institute for Global Justice chose to tackle this growing sense of uncertainty at the international level by developing The Washington Compact on Norms of Behavior for Commercial Space Operations. Drawing on its pillars of conflict prevention, global governance and rule of law, the Institute assembled leading personalities from the space policy sector, major trade associations and companies (launch, satellite operators, insurance, capital investment and new space) from the U.S., Europe, South America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific to generate The Washington Compact. The Washington Compact to date has 70 civil society signatories and more are being sought. The Institute recognizes that the objectives of The Washington Compact cannot be fully achieved without the awareness and cooperation of governments. To date, it has been submitted to the UN Secretary-General, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, India, Romania, Brazil, Norway, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Space Agency, and several other governments, and governing bodies.

The Compact is a civil society-generated set of high-level commitments taken on voluntarily by Signatories and applicable to their outer space activities in Earth-orbit and on the surface, subsurface, and in the orbit of the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. The principles of transparency, predictability, interoperability, and sustainability are fundamental precepts for The Washington Compact and its signatories to strengthen the global space economy. Equally important, it is a complementary and supportive instrument to existing space legislation and can be used to inform the development of new national governance structures.

The Washington Compact is attached for further examination.