



MAY 19 1987

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 25 November 1986
at 3 p.m.
New York

A / COLLECTION

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRTEMÇELİK (Turkey)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 72: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 137: QUESTION OF THE REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON REGISTRATION OF
OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE (continued)

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 72: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/SPC/41/L.28 and L.29)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)
(A/41/20 and Corr.1)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/41/560 and Corr.1)

AGENDA ITEM 137: QUESTION OF THE REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON REGISTRATION OF
OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/41/141; A/SPC/41/L.30)

1. Mr. HUANG (China) said that the discussion of the peaceful uses of outer space and the strengthening of international co-operation in that field were especially important during the International Year of Peace and that the extension of the arms race into outer space posed a serious threat. His country, which supported the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind and was opposed to any form of arms race and militarization in outer space, felt that it was time for the international community to adopt measures in that regard.

2. His delegation was satisfied with the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees. COPUOS should mainly consider the scientific, technical and legal aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space and promote negotiations between the super-Powers in order to prevent the militarization of outer space and an arms race there. Furthermore, he appreciated the results achieved at the twenty-ninth session of COPUOS, which, after 12 years of negotiations, had been able to adopt by consensus the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space, which constituted a compromise between different interests and which established general norms governing remote sensing activities, thus serving to promote their development in the future. His delegation also took note of the progress made with regard to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, which constituted a sound basis for future work. That work should take account of the latest developments in international law concerning nuclear safety. The international community should speed up the work of formulating the relevant legal principles in order to regulate relations among States in that area.

3. China supported the introduction of new items in the programme of work of COPUOS and the Sub-Committees provided that they reflected the real state of the development of space, favoured the promotion of international co-operation and gave appropriate attention to the needs of the developing countries. Furthermore, in 1986, which marked the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, consideration should be given to the question of revising and supplementing the provisions of the Convention in order to improve and strengthen the system.

(Mr. Huang, China)

4. The role of COPUOS in promoting international co-operation should continue to be strengthened through the preparation of effective programmes. In 1988, his Government would hold in Beijing an international symposium on space applications in communication and education by television via satellite, as his country's contribution to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Lastly, he called upon all States to strengthen international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space in order to broaden the application of satellite technology, exchange scientific and technical information, provide training in that field and promote the development of space law by preventing the extension of an arms race into outer space and ensuring its use for peaceful purposes.

5. Mr. GODSON (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the Twelve member States of the European Community, expressed satisfaction at the valuable contribution of COPUOS to the elaboration of treaties on principles governing the exploration and use of outer space and referred to the recent agreement reached on the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space. There was no doubt that co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space would lead to better understanding and trust between States. In order to achieve that, COPUOS should adhere to the mandate entrusted to it and should not deal with issues such as arms control in outer space, as some delegations persistently sought to do. Although that issue gave rise to genuine concern, which the Twelve shared, it should be dealt with in forums which specialized in disarmament, for example, the United Nations bodies established for that purpose. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that there already existed an international legal framework of limitations on the use of outer space with provisions designed to prevent an arms race in outer space. The relevant forums should improve that framework and the Twelve accordingly welcomed the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space of the Conference on Disarmament and hoped that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva would be successful.

6. The Twelve were encouraged by the recognition of the need to enhance the scientific and technical content of the work of COPUOS, which could achieve worthwhile results provided there was a mutually acceptable basis. The Twelve therefore welcomed the agreement on the introduction of a new agenda item for the Legal Sub-Committee. The member States of the European Community had put forward suggestions in that regard and looked forward to discussing them, together with other proposals, at the Sub-Committee's next session.

7. Taking into account the financial crisis confronting the United Nations, the Twelve emphasized that all States Members of the Organization should make proper and effective use of existing facilities before thinking about the creation of new machinery for which there did not seem to be a convincing need. COPUOS could help enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations by improving its own functioning and making more effective use of the time allotted to it.

8. The Twelve, which had demonstrated on numerous occasions their commitment to international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space by developing and pooling their knowledge and expertise with other countries, believed that collaboration was essential for the exploration of outer space in the future.

9. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador) expressed satisfaction that COPUOS had been able to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space, which was the most notable accomplishment of 1986. Ecuador, in spite of certain reservations which it had expressed earlier, was prepared to join in the consensus because it believed that the adoption of the principles was an important step in the development and codification of space law. He hoped that those principles would be respected and fully implemented, with account taken of the needs of the developing countries.

10. The adoption of the draft principles relating to remote sensing would make it possible to achieve results on other items under consideration by COPUOS and its two Sub-Committees, which frequently encountered difficulty in reaching agreement on questions of great importance. Such was the case with the equitable legal regulation of the geostationary orbit, which some continued to refuse to consider in depth in spite of the fact that it constituted an indispensable and critical aspect of international co-operation. In 1984, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia and Kenya had submitted draft principles in that regard to the Legal Sub-Committee. The draft ensured the possibility of placing satellites in the future in the sectors of the orbit which were not saturated through increasing use by the space Powers. He hoped that that question could be discussed in a constructive manner at the next session of the Sub-Committee. His country had supported the recommendation made by the Group of 77 that the Legal Sub-Committee, at its 1987 session, should consider the possibility of proposing as a new item on its agenda access by States to benefits of the exploration and uses of outer space.

11. Developing countries found themselves disoriented because they lacked the resources required to implement the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as well as the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and held that the exchange of views in the Sub-Committee was inadequate if not accompanied by the preparation of specific programmes and projects. Nevertheless, he found encouraging the decision that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should establish, in 1987, a plenary working group to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference in order to improve the execution of international co-operation activities and to propose specific means to increase that co-operation and make it more effective.

12. No agreement had been reached on ways and means to reserve outer space for peaceful purposes. His country, which had supported the actions of various countries to halt the arms race in outer space, renewed its appeal to the parties most directly concerned to start constructive negotiations to protect outer space. The Committee, whose future depended on the result of such negotiations, should support measures to avoid the proliferation of arms in space.

13. Lastly, he referred to the success of the third United Nations/WMO/FAO/ESA International Training Course on Remote Sensing Applications to Operational Agrometeorology and Hydrology held from 21 October to 7 November in Quito, the capital of his country.

14. Mrs. CLARK (United States of America) noted that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would consider for the first time, at its 1987 session, two new items in the field of space science, planetary exploration and astronomy. That would strengthen the scientific content of the Sub-Committee's work and would enable the United Nations to keep abreast of new knowledge in that area. In 1987, the Sub-Committee, to meet a long-standing need, would also establish a working group to evaluate implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and thereby improve the execution of United Nations activities in that area.

15. She noted that the theme for special attention for the Sub-Committee in 1987 would be space communications for development, and as part of that effort the United States intended to organize a seminar on 16 February at Columbia University, with the participation of specialists from developing countries.

16. Her delegation took particular note of the fact that the Legal Sub-Committee had completed, after more than a decade of work, a consensus text of draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from outer space. That text, which was based on flexibility and international co-operation, avoided the rigid constraints that had hindered the discussions in the Sub-Committee for many years and showed what satisfactory results could be obtained when the consensus principle was respected and efforts were concentrated on areas where agreement was possible. The progress achieved reflected the impetus given to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 39/96 and 40/162, which reaffirmed the important role the Committee must play in maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

17. In other areas, however, the discussions of the Committee were less encouraging. Overall, the United States considered that much remained to be done to ensure that the Committee functioned effectively in keeping with its mandate as the only standing committee of the General Assembly for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. It was regrettable, for example, that certain Member States refused to acknowledge the urgent need to review the methods of work in order to achieve greater efficiency. The Committee and its subsidiary bodies, particularly the Legal Sub-Committee, could not retain their credibility if they failed to take concerted action to improve their operations. It was also disappointing that the Committee had not begun to work on the new item relating to spin-offs from outer space programmes. The same delegations that were unwilling even to discuss strengthening the work of the Committee were enthusiastic supporters of vague and sterile proposals for new international machinery.

18. Concerning item 137 on the review of the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, her delegation felt that the Convention had worked satisfactorily for the past 10 years and that for many Member States it provided the only source of information in that field. The Convention did not require revision and the General Assembly should strongly urge all Member States, particularly those conducting space activities, to become parties to it. So far, only 35 States had ratified the Convention, or less than 50 per cent of the members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. That situation was

(Mrs. Clark, United States)

unsatisfactory, given that one of the purposes of the Convention was to reinforce the concept of State responsibility as central to international law governing outer space.

19. Mr. STACKHOUSE (Canada) said that 1986 had been for his country a year of growth and consolidation. The Government of Canada had stated in May that the development of its national economy was linked to progress in the field of space technology. Public resources to be allocated to the space programme would stimulate the space industry and enable it to maintain and enhance the country's already enviable position in the areas of telecommunications, space robotics and remote sensing. The development of space technology would have extensive spin-offs in areas not directly related to space and would be a catalyst in general economic development. Canada attached special importance to international co-operation in outer space, and the projects scheduled to be carried out in the country during the following decade required almost without exception the continuation of active international co-operation. Canada wished to participate in the United States manned space-station project and it was building a mobile service centre for the assembly, maintenance and repair of space-station components. It was also taking part in various programmes of the European Space Agency and intended to participate in others in the future. It would also maintain its participation in the COSPAR/SARSAT system, which had already contributed to saving human lives. Canada would consider other co-operative projects with newcomers in the area of space activities and would invite several other countries to join Canadian programmes, such as the RADARSAT remote-sensing project and MSAT, a new commercial system for mobile communications. The Canadian Government would soon put before Parliament a bill creating a Canadian space agency, which would allow Canadians to contribute more fully to the peaceful uses of outer space and to the development of space techniques that could be applied both to distinctly Canadian problems and to the common problems of mankind.

20. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been able to achieve significant progress in the current year and had succeeded in establishing principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space. On the basis of a working paper submitted by Canada, the Legal Sub-Committee had approved two draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. He noted with satisfaction that that item would remain on the agenda of the Sub-Committee, which would now be able to give priority attention to the three principles on which agreement remained to be reached.

21. Concerning the review of the Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, several delegations, including his own, had expressed the view that improvements could be made in the procedure for registration of space objects and that the Legal Sub-Committee might elaborate recommendations for adoption by the General Assembly. Canada therefore asked the Secretary-General to submit to the Sub-Committee at its next session a report on the application of the Convention so as to facilitate the study of the question.

22. Since the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee remained particularly heavy, Canada had not insisted that the working group on nuclear power sources be reconvened in 1987 and was pleased that the Sub-Committee itself would

(Mr. Stackhouse, Canada)

continue its consideration of that question on a priority basis. Nevertheless, it held the view that the working group should be reconvened in 1988, given the importance attached by the Legal Sub-Committee to technical information received from the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. Additional information was still required regarding method, form and frequency of notification and guidelines and criteria for the safe and reliable use of nuclear power sources. It was therefore important to ensure full co-ordination of the work of both Sub-Committees on that question.

23. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee must also continue to strengthen the scientific content of its work. In that respect, special thanks should be addressed to participants from NASA, NOAA, the Institute of Medical Sciences and Space Medicine of the USSR, COSPAR and the International Astronautical Federation. His delegation supported the identification of a main theme for each session of the Sub-Committee and believed that the one chosen for 1987, space communications for development, was especially relevant.

24. In respect of the implications of the current financial crisis of the United Nations for the Organization's work in the field of outer space, his delegation believed that a rigorous examination of the calendar of meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be carried out and that strict priorities should be established in the implementation of its programme. However, that should not result in curtailment of the time available to the Legal Sub-Committee, for progress in the latter's work required that there be an opportunity for informal consultations outside of plenary meetings. One method might be to do away with the general debate at the outset of the sessions of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, which largely replicated the statements made in the Special Political Committee. The proposal made by the delegation of the Netherlands to restructure the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by consolidating the meetings of the Committee and its Sub-Committees into one annual three-and-a-half-week session had so far not been discussed. Given the current financial crisis, Canada would favour a discussion of that proposal and other similar proposals at the next session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

25. Lastly, he recalled that the launching of the space age had promised a boundless universe to discover and explore, a new field of human endeavour and, above all, an opportunity to leave behind old rivalries and to dedicate space to peaceful uses for the benefit of all mankind. The international community must keep that promise alive through the organizations which it had mandated for that purpose and with good will and renewed efforts on the part of all nations.

26. Mr. KOVAČIČ (Czechoslovakia) said that given the serious danger that outer space might be conquered by weapons capable of unleashing a world catastrophe, peace-loving States were proposing the intensive use of outer space for peaceful purposes and the establishment of new mechanisms of international co-operation in that area. Mankind was already benefiting from space technology. Satellites permitted improved communications; warnings of hurricanes, tsunami and impact waves, droughts and natural disasters; more reliable weather forecasts; examination

(Mr. Kováčič, Czechoslovakia)

of the structure of the Earth's surface; study of oceanic phenomena; and monitoring of forest fires and aerial or naval disasters. All those activities, which represented only a tiny fraction of what could be done, raised the effectiveness of economic activities and saved considerable resources.

27. In resolutions 39/96 and 40/162, the General Assembly had given the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space a mandate to deal systematically with ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to create favourable political conditions for the solution of other issues falling within the agenda of the Committee's subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, some delegations argued that those issues belonged on the agenda of other organs and that discussing them meant politicizing the Committee and would even be a waste of time. Those delegations also unhesitatingly exerted pressure for shortening the negotiating time of the Committee and its Sub-Committees and, on the pretext of "effectiveness", had even managed to reduce the time devoted to consideration of that item in the Special Political Committee.

28. His delegation was not the only one that regarded the maintenance of a peaceful outer space as a priority matter. Referring to paragraph 19 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, he stressed that even though there was a certain relationship between that issue and the question of disarmament, they were obviously two separate topics. Any attempt to treat those two similar questions as identical served only one purpose, namely, to becloud the issue and remove it from the sphere of competence of the Special Political Committee and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. That was tantamount to a substantial weakening of the latter body and a significant restricting of its mandate. Document A/AC.105/L.161 proposed the adoption of measures to strengthen international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space and the development of such co-operation could be secured only if all States understood the importance of preventing the use of any type of weapons in outer space.

29. During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, many delegations of both Western and Eastern European countries, as well as a number of developing countries, had stressed the importance of preventing the militarization of outer space. Despite that, the United States, which viewed outer space as an appropriate place for deploying its strike systems, was actively pursuing "Star Wars" and moving ahead at full speed in space weapons research and the psychological preparation of its population.

30. Citizens of some countries believed that a "space shield" would guarantee their security in a nuclear war or bring them economic advantages. In fact, the programme of militarization of outer space was devouring substantial material, energy and scientific potentials. In five years the expenditures devoted to United States space research had increased by 250 per cent. Given the importance which the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space attached to the equitable and rational use of outer space, including the geostationary orbit, he wondered what would happen if the United States were to deploy its 3,200 space combat stations as part of its Strategic Defence Initiative programme. That would in effect be a "military occupation" of outer space.

(Mr. Kovačič, Czechoslovakia)

31. Attempts to turn outer space into a new battlefield jeopardized the current balance of power between the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty countries on the one hand, and the United States and NATO members on the other, with a resulting risk of nuclear conflict. The relationship between nuclear weapons and space weapons was so close that it was imperative that all States make a joint effort to ensure that outer space was used exclusively for peaceful purposes and to halt the arms race on Earth.
32. At the current session of the General Assembly, a group of socialist countries had proposed consideration of the question of establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security that would also include measures to prevent the use of any types of weapons in outer space. Czechoslovakia, whose foreign policy was based on peace, considered it imperative to ensure that exploration of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, was pursued exclusively for peaceful purposes. It was necessary to ban the development, testing and deployment of space weapons, to conclude an agreement on the inviolability of the Earth's man-made satellites and to intensify negotiations that would lead to the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting the use of outer space for military purposes.
33. With regard to international co-operation, a major step forward would be made through the formulation of legal principles governing activities not involving the militarization of outer space, such as the development of space science and technology, and the implementation of international projects for the exploration and general use of outer space. Such co-operation would make it possible to co-ordinate efforts and would help to strengthen confidence among States. It might also be possible to establish a world space organization to co-ordinate the implementation of specialized programmes of peaceful uses of outer space, and to monitor compliance with the relevant agreements.
34. Unlike countries which did not concentrate resources on economic development for the welfare of the people, Czechoslovakia pursued far-reaching development plans and considered military spending, even when exclusively defensive, to be a burden on the economy. As far as space activities were concerned, Czechoslovakia had been the third country to send one of its citizens into space. It had launched its own satellite and had been actively participating in space-exploration programmes.
35. In connection with the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Sub-Committees, he referred in particular to: (1) the escalation of the controversy over questions relating to ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes; (2) attempts to draw into the deliberations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee topics belonging to the realm of "popular science", which meant pushing into the background questions of great significance for multilateral co-operation; and (3) the tendency to shorten the negotiating time of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, apparently for economic reasons. That was not conducive to the solution of the problems related to the mandate of the Committee and its Sub-Committees. The solution lay in a better organization of work, in active participation by delegations and in the timely preparation of the relevant documents.

36. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the space activities of States must be consistent with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, as well as other instruments providing the legal framework for such activities. Space law required that space activities should be for the benefit of mankind. The Treaty provided that the exploration and use of outer space must be for peaceful purposes; it called for freedom of exploration and use of outer space and prohibited national appropriation of outer space by claim of sovereignty, or any form of dominion in outer space. Scientific research could not be regarded as conferring legal title of ownership. Those provisions should be implemented in all spheres where opportunities for the developing world to achieve decent standards of living were in danger. Space technology should promote sustained economic and social development. Hence the importance of remote sensing, the question of timely and non-discriminatory access to data by the sensed State, and international liability for the misuse and manipulation of information to its detriment. Such questions were related to the inalienable principle of permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources, and equality of nations before the law.

37. His delegation had been advocating the adoption of an agreement in that area, which was of vital importance to the developing countries, and considered that the document adopted at the latest session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space provided an adequate basis for a consensus. It was also necessary to regulate without delay nuclear power sources in outer space. Chile therefore supported the Swedish proposal for a moratorium on such sources. It was important for mankind to have minimum guarantees of not being exposed to irremediable catastrophe in the future. There was also a need for more precise legislation with respect to direct, indirect and delayed damage, and with respect to international liability for transboundary contamination.

38. It was imperative to formulate regulations to overcome the contradictions between the norms of the International Telecommunication Union and article II of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, relating to the geostationary orbit, the use of which must be equitable and must take into account the interests and needs of the developing countries. It was also important to delimit outer space so that there would be a juridical framework for space activities and an end to the confusion caused by the overlapping of two types of régimes of sovereignty.

39. One of the most pressing problems was the growing militarization of space. Because of the inconsistencies between the provisions of the various legal instruments, more appropriate legal and political mechanisms to avert devastating conflicts were indispensable. The Secretary-General should solicit the views of Member States on that question and on ways and means of making outer space an arena of peace and co-operation. There was also a need to revive the French initiative regarding the establishment of an international monitoring satellites agency. In addition, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should make technical resources and assistance available to the main disarmament forums.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

40. He reiterated the hope that joint action and solidarity in Latin America would prove to be the best formula for effective space co-operation in the region. He welcomed the fact that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had been entrusted with the task of strengthening regional co-operation in that field.

41. Chile was firmly convinced that space activities offered encouraging prospects to the peoples of the world, especially the most disadvantaged. However, militarization or over-commercialization would only further widen the gap between rich and poor countries. It was essential to update space law and its relevant norms (resolution 40/162, third preambular paragraph) to ensure universal access to the benefits of space activities. The 1982 United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had formulated central guidelines to ensure that space activities were conducted for the benefit of all the peoples of the world irrespective of their level of scientific and technological development. That mandate could not be ignored.

42. Mrs. NAVCHAA (Mongolia) said that the question of international co-operation was very important because of the scientific and technological development of outer space. Since the launching of the first Sputnik and man's first space flight, many advances had been made in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Such advances included research on Halley's Comet, an outstanding example of international co-operation among States, the Soviet Union's new space station, MIR, and the successful launching of artificial satellites by Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Sweden, as well as the growing participation by the developing countries in space research.

43. Mongolia participated to the extent possible in activities involving the exploration of outer space within the framework of co-operation among the socialist countries under the Intercosmos programme. It was also engaged in a scientific programme involving remote sensing of its natural resources from space. The data obtained had enabled it to prepare thematic maps of the country's various types of resources.

44. Mongolia was satisfied with the conclusions in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/41/20). It considered that outer space should be used solely for peaceful purposes; it therefore regretted that no apparent headway had been made on the priority question of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Mongolia opposed the militarization of space, which should be free from all weapons, whether offensive or defensive. Accordingly, it supported the initiatives of the Soviet Union, especially those reproduced in the communication of 10 June 1986 from Mr. Ryzhkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General, the New Delhi Declaration, and the Political Declaration of the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries (A/41/697).

(Mrs. Navchaa, Mongolia)

45. It would be appropriate to study the replies submitted by States in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/87, especially those relating to international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space, and to perfect the relevant recommendations, as proposed in document A/AC.105/L.161, submitted to the Committee by a number of socialist countries, including Mongolia.

46. Her country attached great importance to the recommendations of the 1982 United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which should be fully implemented. Mongolia had supported the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1987, and would participate within the limits of its capabilities in the activities carried out under that Programme.

47. The agreement reached on the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space had been one of the most important achievements of the Legal Sub-Committee. Mongolia had joined in the consensus, but would have preferred it if certain principles, such as the liability of States, had been expressed in a clearer and more precise form.

48. Her delegation considered that the draft principles governing the activities of States in the utilization of the geostationary orbit, submitted by the German Democratic Republic to the Legal Sub-Committee at its most recent session, could serve as the basis for a new examination of the question.

49. Mongolia attached great importance to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, which it had signed and ratified. In view of the increasing activities in outer space, that Convention was growing in importance. Her delegation therefore called upon countries which had not yet ratified the Convention to do so.

50. Mr. SCHLICKE (German Democratic Republic) said that the space age had been initiated with the launching of the first Soviet earth satellite Sputnik I, and that research offered considerable scope for the development of co-operation among States, as exemplified by the observation and exploration of Halley's Comet, the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite rescue system, and the Phobos experiment to explore the planet Mars. He added that, in order to launch new, large-scale projects concerning outer space, a new stage of international co-operation was needed; but that could be brought about only in conditions of "star peace", disarmament and increased security in the world. In that regard he quoted the relevant passage from the statement made by Mr. Oskar Fischer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, in the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly. He added that the policy of result-oriented dialogue pursued by the German Democratic Republic accorded with the view of the majority of Member States.

51. His country's delegation had outlined in detail its position on the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" in the First Committee at the current session, as reproduced in document A/C.1/41/PV.21. It had co-sponsored a draft resolution on that topic (A/C.1/41/L.24/Rev.1), which had received 130 affirmative votes.

(Mr. Schlicke, German
Democratic Republic)

52. Mankind should enter the third millennium ready to implement large-scale projects for the peaceful uses of outer space, which would help to eliminate hunger and economic backwardness, protect the environment and develop new sources of energy. The German Democratic Republic considered that the establishing of a world space organization within the United Nations system, as proposed by the Soviet Union, would help in achieving that objective.

53. At a recent meeting of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, it had been noted that intensive political dialogue, contacts and negotiations were the only way to reach the objectives discussed at Reykjavik. All organs and organizations of the United Nations system could and must contribute to that end. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which had made a constructive contribution in that field, had an important role to play, in order to fulfil its principal task, which was to prevent a militarization of outer space. The German Democratic Republic therefore deemed it necessary that the General Assembly at its current session should extend the mandate of that Committee so that it could continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, as envisaged in the Austrian draft resolution.

54. The exploration and peaceful uses of outer space gave rise to a number of political and legal problems which needed to be settled in accordance with the United Nations Charter and other generally accepted norms of inter-State relations. In that regard the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had achieved constructive results, in that it had endorsed the draft principles relating to the remote sensing of the Earth from space and had recommended their adoption by the General Assembly at the current session. Those principles would be instrumental in enhancing legal security with regard to remote sensing from outer space and would promote co-operation among countries in that field. In that regard, he quoted the last sentence of principle IV.

55. The German Democratic Republic attached great importance to the problems associated with the use of the geostationary orbit, and considered that a generally accepted solution to the complex political, legal and technical questions arising in the International Telecommunication Union and the Legal Sub-Committee would be in the interest of all States. There was a need for regulations which ensured that all States had an equal right to utilize the geostationary orbit and had equitable access to it. To that end, the German Democratic Republic had submitted a working paper entitled "Draft principles governing the activities of States in the utilization of the geostationary orbit" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.153). He hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee would continue its consideration of that matter at its forthcoming session.

56. His country attached great importance to the full implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). It had participated in the organization of UNESCO training courses and its scientists had lectured at United Nations seminars. Specialists from developing countries had also received training at universities and scientific institutes in his country.

(Mr. Schlicke, German
Democratic Republic)

57. In support of the Space Applications Programme of the United Nations, his country was offering three 1-year fellowships in the field of remote sensing applications, beginning on 15 January 1987, and a training course on remote sensing applications to geological sciences for participants from developing countries in October 1987.

58. His delegation would vote in favour of the resolutions submitted by the working group of the Special Political Committee.

59. Mr. KAKOLECKI (Poland) retraced the history of the space age and observed that, from the outset, the basic principle of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes had been established as the main guideline. However, as Poland's highest representative, Mr. Jaruzelski, had said at the fortieth session of the General Assembly, mankind was now confronted with the threat of the transfer of the arms race to outer space. Poland's position in that regard was reflected in its reply to General Assembly resolution 40/87.

60. Poland endorsed fully the programme of action for the peaceful exploitation and use of outer space, presented by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Ryzkov, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It also believed that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space complemented the efforts of other relevant bodies dealing with disarmament problems. Accordingly, it had sponsored document A/AC.105/L.161, which contained concrete proposals for keeping outer space free of weapons and for uniting the efforts of States in its peaceful exploration, and also proposed new tasks for the Legal Sub-Committee.

61. His delegation endorsed the draft principles relating to remote sensing as the best possible compromise solution, taking into account the interests of different countries. The principles should, in particular, ensure in practice the access of sensed States to remote sensing data and sensing States should bear responsibility for their activities in accordance with international law.

62. Concerning the draft principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the two draft principles on notification and assistance to States deserved endorsement.

63. Unfortunately, the Legal Sub-Committee and, consequently, the Outer Space Committee had not been able to bring any closer together the diverging views on the delimitation of outer space and the use of the geostationary orbit, which were matters of paramount importance. Any future regulation should take into account the fact that the geostationary orbit was inseparable from outer space as a whole and was governed by the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty. The relevant proposal submitted by the German Democratic Republic was a good basis for further work.

64. Poland contributed to scientific progress in the exploration of outer space through its national programmes and within the framework of international co-operation. The institutes participating in Poland's space activities were

(Mr. Kakolecki, Poland)

working primarily within the framework of the Intercosmos programme. In particular, remote sensing techniques had been introduced into topographic map preparation and updating on the basis of satellite images. Poland had recently taken part in the VEGA project, which had offered a unique opportunity to study Halley's comet.

65. His delegation hoped that the chance to ensure "Star Peace" would not be missed and would attract the attention of all interested United Nations bodies.

66. Mr. LOWELL (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the attacks by the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Cuba and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic were a mendacious distortion of the facts, since they attributed to his country an interest in extending the arms race to outer space. The United States came under such attacks whenever the item was considered, even though the mandate of the Special Political Committee did not include the issues that the Eastern European countries insisted on raising.

67. Mr. KOVÁČIČ (Czechoslovakia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was easy to prove, even through written documents submitted to the United States Congress, that the United States was spending enormous sums of money on the arms race in outer space. Czechoslovakia and other peace-loving socialist States were trying to prevent such an arms race and hoped that the United States would support the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in co-operation with the rest of the international community.

68. Mr. NUÑEZ (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that there were clear indications that the United States Government was trying to put weapons into space. That was not just speculation, for there was an actual programme for which increasing amounts of money were being requested. The arms race in space could be avoided if there were a genuine interest in doing so, and agreements and concrete proposals could be arrived at in order to eliminate the threat it posed. His delegation had decided not to refer directly to the United States since the guilty party was not the people but the present Government of that country.

69. Mr. ZAREMBOVSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that there was nothing in his statement that could be considered an unfounded accusation. The United States must understand that its task was to ensure that outer space was used for peaceful purposes and, in that connection, he repeated that he regretted the United States plans to transform space into a staging ground for the arms race, thereby threatening mankind with its sinister Star Wars.

70. Mr. LOWELL (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply for a second time, said that the delegations of the Eastern European countries had not heeded his recommendation to confine their comments to the questions under consideration. His delegation did not intend to be drawn into a complicated debate in response to their provocation. It was striking, however, that in their statements those delegations themselves acknowledged that they could

(Mr. Lowell, United States)

not distinguish between fact and fiction and between what was relevant and what was not. Such an acknowledgement was hardly surprising, for it was symptomatic of other problems which were not going to be solved at the current meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.