



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 29 October 1980
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MATHIAS (Portugal)

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The meeting was called to order at 1.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 55: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/SPC/35/4 and 5; A/SPC/35/L.10-L.12)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/35/20)
- (b) REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/35/46)

AGENDA ITEM 56: PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/SPC/35/L.10-L.12)

1. Mr. ZAREMBOVSKY (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) reminded the Committee that, in April 1981, 20 years would have elapsed since the first voyage by man into outer space. During the intervening period, space science had followed a dazzling course: from the first satellite and the flight of Yuri Gagarin to the intensive work accomplished by a number of crews on board orbiting scientific complexes, the study and conquest of outer space had become one of the principal sources of scientific and technical progress in the twentieth century. Space science had demonstrated to all the benefits of peaceful and creative work and of the joint efforts of countries seeking solutions to scientific and technological problems.

2. The recently concluded 185-day flight of the SALYUT-6/SOYUZ-36 scientific research complex had proved of particular value in that connexion. In the course of that unprecedented expedition, the cosmonauts had implemented a vast programme of medico-biological, geophysical, astrophysical and technological research and experiments within the framework of international co-operation. Four lengthy expeditions and nine short expeditions had worked successfully on board the SALYUT-6 station, and among them had been seven international groups. The information obtained had been of use to fishing fleets, environmental specialists and geologists. During the flight of the SALYUT-6 station a new supply system had been successfully tried out; the system had involved the use of automated and remotely controlled transportation and cargo vehicles of the SOYUZ-36 and PROGRESS type which had orbited the material required to maintain the crew and carry out scientific experiments and research. There had been an increase in the number of stations which, in addition to receiving television and radio programmes, could effect linkage by telephone and telegraphic means and process the facsimile reproduction of newspapers. Space applications designed to convey hydrometeorological information to a number of countries and to study natural resources had been improved. Generally speaking, according to data received from users of outer space information, the application of such information had produced

(Mr. Zarembovsky, Byelorussian SSR)

economic benefits estimated at hundreds of millions of roubles annually; such benefits had also accrued to the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

3. He noted with satisfaction that the fruitful co-operation between countries of the socialist community in the conquest of outer space was continuing and had become more intense. Under the INTERCOSMOS programme, astronauts from Czechoslovakia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Viet Nam and Cuba had been among the crew members of Soviet spacecraft; in the near future cosmonauts from other countries participating in the programme would be sent into outer space. The successes of space science were the common heritage of mankind and helped to strengthen peace and further the progress and well-being of all.

4. He congratulated those countries - in particular Viet Nam, Hungary and Cuba - whose representatives had, in 1980, so successfully completed the manned orbital system flight programme. He stressed the fruitful work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific, and Technical and Legal Sub-Committees in co-ordinating and encouraging international co-operation. The report on the work of the Committee (A/35/20) summarized the achievements accomplished in the field of space research and indicated the main directions which outer space co-operation between States would in future take. The report also dealt with technical and legal questions of a practical nature and with the objectives of scientific and technological progress. One such goal related to the health and vital functions of man during prolonged space flight. The increase in the time during which man could remain and function in outer space had been made possible by the intensive work of the design engineers and specialists in space medicine who had perfected the technology of space rocketry and security systems and had created the necessary conditions in which astronauts on board space ships could remain active. The further improvement of systems which safeguarded the lives and health of astronauts during lengthy space voyages was an important goal of the international community. An astronaut undertook a space voyage not only for the welfare and progress of his own country but also in the interests of all States.

5. His delegation also wished to refer to the preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting; that issue, and in particular the matter of international legal regulation, was of growing importance. His delegation had contributed actively to the preparation of the UNESCO Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. It had always defended the widest possible dissemination of information for the strengthening of understanding, peace and friendship between peoples. Yet, a number of States wished to impose on the international community principles relating to broadcasting from outer space which would make it possible to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States. Such an approach was counter to the purposes of the United Nations, and the Byelorussian SSR considered that it was necessary, within the framework of the United Nations, to prepare, on the basis of mutual agreement between the countries

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concerned, principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting.

6. The debate on direct television broadcasting which had taken place in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had shown that most delegations were ready to conclude consideration of the item on the basis of the principle that broadcasts expressly beamed to a foreign State should only be permitted if appropriate agreements and conventions existed with the States concerned.

7. His delegation believed that the speedy preparation by that Committee of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting would contribute to the strengthening of peace and mutual understanding between peoples. It hoped that the formulation of legal principles on remote sensing of the earth from space would be completed as soon as possible, as a firm international legal basis for co-operation would thereby be established.

8. Mr. FUJITA (Japan) said that his country intended to continue its active participation as a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. He congratulated the Soviet Union, India and the United States on their latest achievements in space activities and expressed the hope that those achievements would be applied for the benefit of all mankind. During the past 10 years Japan had successfully launched approximately 20 satellites to conduct various programmes of observation and experiments. Of particular interest was the geostationary meteorological satellite HIMAWARI, which was being used for daily weather forecasting in Japan and was also relaying photographic data to a number of countries in the Asia and the Pacific region. In 1979 a telecommunications satellite corporation had been established to prepare for the future control and operation of domestic communication and broadcasting satellites. In the field of remote sensing, an earth observation centre had been established in 1978 for the direct reception of data from LANDSAT. Japan was developing its space science and technology for peaceful purposes on the basis of the long-range guidelines set by its Space Activities Commission in 1978, while arrangements had been made for the launching of a number of satellites between 1981 and 1985.

9. He noted that in the course of the current debate some delegations had expressed disappointment over the lack of substantial progress on the two priority items under consideration in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee. Remote sensing and direct television broadcasting by satellites were new areas in the practical application of space technology and the slow pace of progress in the consideration of those matters by the Sub-Committees was precisely due to the fact that the issues relating to the dissemination of remote sensing data, the classification of such data and the formulation of draft principles on direct television broadcasting were the root of the problem. His delegation shared the hope that the Legal Sub-Committee would be able to overcome the remaining difficulties at its next session.

10. With respect to the United Nations programme on space applications, his delegation noted with appreciation the important role played by the United Nations

(Mr. Fujita, Japan)

- in providing assistance to developing countries through such programmes, in co-operation with Member States. As a part of such efforts, his Government had hosted a United Nations seminar on remote sensing applications for land use planning, in which 19 experts from ESCAP member countries had participated.
11. His delegation attached great importance to the elaboration of safety measures relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and noted that the Working Group had reiterated its conclusion that nuclear power sources could be used safely in outer space, provided that all necessary safety requirements were met. His delegation fully supported the recommendation of the Working Group that it should continue its work, in view of the fact that it had been unable to complete it. The tasks of the Working Group could be further facilitated if all interested Member States contributed their studies and views on that subject, as certain countries, including Japan, had already done.
12. With regard to the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, although the time allotted had been insufficient, useful discussions had been held on a new agenda item, "Review of existing international law relevant to outer space activities with a view to determining the appropriateness of supplementing such law with provisions relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space". At the last session of the Committee, many delegations had expressed support for the Canadian proposal that the question of nuclear power sources should be accorded priority at the next session of the legal Sub-Committee, that a working group should be set up for its consideration, and that the current agenda item should be amended in order to reflect more accurately that widely held view. His delegation shared the views of the Canadian delegation and stressed the need to allocate more time for the consideration of that item at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee.
13. With respect to the work which the Committee had carried out in its capacity as the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, his delegation noted with satisfaction that various recommendations had been made to the General Assembly concerning the venue, duration, participants, background papers and public information aspects of the Conference. He urged the General Assembly to decide, in accordance with the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, to accept the invitation of the Government of Austria and to hold the Conference in Vienna from 9 to 21 August 1982. His delegation expressed great satisfaction at the recent appointment of Professor Yash Pal of India as the Secretary-General of the Conference, and voiced the hope that the other members of the Conference Secretariat would be appointed in the near future so that the preparatory work might continue.
14. At its last two sessions, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference had concentrated on the organizational aspects and had set up a useful framework for more detailed preparations. In addition to the background papers being prepared by the international teams, all the States Members of the United Nations, especially the members of the Preparatory Committee, were requested to prepare and submit national papers outlining the state of their countries' space science and technology efforts.

(Mr. Fujita, Japan)

15. His delegation looked forward to the Conference as an opportunity to work with other Member States in order to promote international co-operation in the application of space science and technology for peaceful purposes. Lastly, he expressed sincere thanks to all members of the Outer Space Affairs Division for their valuable assistance to the Committee during the past year.

16. Mr. TIJANI (Nigeria) referred to the joint United Nations/FAO regional seminar on remote sensing applications held in Nigeria in 1979 and expressed thanks to the staff of the Outer Space Affairs Division and FAO; the seminar had given the participants and the Nigerian lecturers an opportunity to benefit from new technology in the field of remote sensing applications.

17. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/35/20), his delegation noted with regret the apparent lack of progress made by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee at their respective sessions. That situation was due mainly to the very rigid positions taken by some delegations and he urged those delegations to be more flexible in the future work of the Sub-Committees in order to allow a meaningful dialogue to take place.

18. The principle of sovereignty over natural resources should continue to apply with respect to the dissemination of processed data to third parties. Consequently, any dissemination of data obtained by remote sensing must be subject to the prior consent of the sensed State and such data must be freely available to it out of respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since data must be processed and classified in order to be useful to developing countries, it would be necessary to have a pool of experts at the regional level under the auspices of the United Nations. The co-ordinating role of the United Nations in remote sensing applications would enable the developing countries to gain confidence. At present, a number of developing countries had been unable to promote or offer to participate in space activities and would not have the necessary resources to do so without assistance from some of the developed countries. All remote sensing activities should be carried out under the moderating influence of the United Nations in order to ensure a successful transfer of space science and technology. With respect to the question of direct television broadcasting by satellites, his delegation regarded the working paper submitted by Canada and Sweden as a good basis for negotiations.

19. The Legal Sub-Committee should set up a working group at its next session to study existing international law relevant to outer space activities. The Secretary-General should provide the working group with an up to date compilation of existing international law in that field. After studying that legislation, the working group would submit its recommendations to the General Assembly, which would decide whether it was necessary to draw up additional protocol on activities in outer space. His delegation was proposing the establishment of a working group because it was essential that developing countries should give adequate consideration to the question of nuclear power sources in outer space. The disintegration of any object launched into space carrying a nuclear power source

(Mr. Tijani, Nigeria)

could have very hazardous environmental effects for life on earth. The ability to detect and eliminate the danger in time depended largely on the availability of technology which most developing countries still lacked. There were also questions relating to damages and/or reparation, which required clearly defined legal rules stipulating the obligations of States which launched objects into space. His delegation therefore urged the Legal Sub-Committee to make a specific recommendation in that regard at its next session in 1981.

20. His delegation expressed satisfaction at the progress made by the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/35/46). The Preparatory Committee had been unable to decide on the appointment of members of the Conference secretariat and had referred the question to the Secretary-General. It was to be hoped that there would be an equitable geographical distribution of posts. He reminded the Committee that the decision to appoint only three Deputy Secretaries-General had been taken on the understanding that in selecting the members of the bureau of the Conference consideration would be given to those regions which were not adequately represented in the secretariat.

21. The time had come for the Committee to give serious consideration to the growing trend towards the militarization of outer space. It was no longer a secret that the pioneers of space technology had subordinated space exploration to military arms and intended to use outer space to accomplish aggressive projects such as surprise attacks. Statistics showed that of the \$116 billion which one of the space Powers had spent on space since 1958, at least \$50 billion had been on defence-oriented programmes, while the other space Power was reported to have spent twice as much on military activities in space as it had on its civilian activities. It had been said that the proper forum for discussion of the situation was the Committee on Disarmament. However, with outer space being a theatre of competing interests in the sphere of militarization, it was incumbent also on the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to deliberate on the question and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly. His delegation strongly believed that all existing international agreements, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and the Outer Space Treaty, which did not at present ban testing of the means of attacking satellites or the placing of military weapons in orbit, should be re-examined.

22. Lastly, he said that Nigeria wished to join the sponsors of draft resolutions A/SPC/35/L.10 and L.11.

23. Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) said that his country had participated actively in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. He deplored the uncompromising attitude of certain States; he hoped that it would not hamper future work, to the detriment of the developing countries. He also hoped that the Secretary-General would take into account the comments made concerning appointment of the members of the bureau of the Conference.

(Mr. Houngavou, Benin)

24. With regard to the participation of fellows from his country in the seminars organized in connexion with remote sensing and other outer space activities, he hoped that in its future work the Committee would consider the financial problem that participation in those seminars raised for the developing countries, in particular the African countries.

25. With regard to the draft resolution on the admission of new members to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/SPC/35/L.12), there was no reason to create a situation which would be difficult to resolve. The participation of States Members in the Committee must be re-examined, since the African and other groups were under-represented on it.

26. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Belgium had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.10. The debate on agenda items 55 and 56 now being concluded, he invited the Committee to vote on the draft resolutions before it.

Draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.10 and Corr.1

27. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.10 and Corr.1, since no delegation had requested a vote on it.

28. It was so decided.

Draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.11

29. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.11, since no delegation had requested a vote on it.

30. It was so decided.

Draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.12

31. At the request of one representative, a recorded vote was taken on part B of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.12.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Tunisia.

32. Part B of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.12 was adopted by 113 votes to one, with one abstention.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.12 as a whole, since no delegation had asked for a separate vote.

34. It was so decided.

35. Mr. GILEYSTEEN (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against part B of the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/35/L.12, but had joined in the consensus on the draft resolution as a whole. His delegation looked forward to the admission of the People's Republic of China to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It was sure that the People's Republic of China, which was a permanent member of the Security Council and an important space Power, would make a valuable contribution to the work of the Committee. His delegation believed that, with the exception of the absence until now of the People's Republic of China, the Committee as constituted had represented the full range of legal and technical expertise which could be brought to bear on outer space issues. The increase in the number of members of the Committee from 48 to 53 would be an impediment to its carrying out its substantive legal and technical work, and any consideration of expanding its membership should be thoroughly discussed within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space itself before a final decision was taken.

36. Mrs. ROSER (Federal Republic of Germany) referred to draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.11 which the Special Political Committee had just approved without a vote, and to part V, paragraph 9 (b), of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/35/46), which dealt with the participation of the United Nations Council for Namibia in the Conference. The views of the Governments of Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the Federal Republic of Germany, on behalf of which she was speaking, were well known. She simply wished to reaffirm that those five Governments maintained the reservations expressed on their behalf on previous occasions regarding the participation of the Council for Namibia. She requested that her statement should be recorded in full.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, the statement of the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany would be reproduced in full.

38. It was so decided.

39. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), referring to his country's position concerning draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.11, said that the views of his delegation on the participation of representatives of the so-called "Palestine Liberation Organization", in whatever capacity, in United Nations conferences had been made abundantly clear in the past. The avowed objectives of the PLO were to destroy Israel and to deprive its people of their independence, sovereignty and self-determination. His delegation therefore wished to place on record its objection to the participation of the so-called PLO in the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space called for in draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.11.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.