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17th meeting

held on

Thursday, 29 October 1981

at 10.30 a.m.

New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 61: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(A/36/20; A/SPC/36/L.4)
- (b) REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/36/46; A/SPC/36/L.5)

AGENDA ITEM 62: 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 (A/36/20)

1. Mr. CARAM (Philippines) said that the tremendous advances made in space science and technology over the past three decades, which had stirred man's imagination as perhaps none of his achievements had done before, had increased the importance and urgency of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. A vast new frontier had been opened up, untouched by the wars, rivalries, mistakes and follies that had constantly marred man's existence on earth. Outer space could still represent a last opportunity for peaceful sharing between men and was a whole new physical dimension which could be used uniquely for the service and benefit of mankind.

2. His delegation was prepared to respond to the call that the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had made in his opening statement at the twenty-fourth session, namely, to resist the temptation of using every advance in modern technology for purposes other than purely peaceful and co-operative ones. Every effort should be made to prevent the nuclear arms race from invading outer space. The existing legal instruments should be examined with a view to improving them and keeping them abreast of rapid technological advances in outer space. His delegation was prepared to support measures to strengthen the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies in order effectively to curb the development, testing and launching of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. International co-operation would be greatly enhanced if those States which had not yet become parties to the relevant international treaties governing the use of outer space would now do so. His Government had, on 26 May 1981, acceded to the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

3. His delegation took note of the space projects recently carried out by a number of Member States and those high achievements would, if based on the principles of mutuality and equity, be of great benefit to humanity. His country had participated actively in a number of United Nations programmes and activities relating to outer space and was, as a developing country, particularly conscious of the benefits to be derived from international co-operation in that field.

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(Mr. Caram, Philippines)

4. Current outer space activities in his country were primarily concentrated on remote sensing, telecommunications, and astronomical and atmospheric research. His Government had submitted a detailed listing of its applications of remote sensing to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In telecommunications, two satellite communication services were being utilized. In astronomical and atmospheric research, his country continued to be actively involved in the Tropical Cyclone Programme of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and took a keen interest in mitigating the disastrous effects of typhoons on its people and economy. He commended WMO for its comprehensive progress report on the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP), the data gathered by which should facilitate further research aimed at influencing the direction and reducing the destructive effect of typhoons. His country, as a member of the international community, had benefited greatly from space science and technology but it also realized much more could be achieved through an integrated and co-ordinated national programme on the use of outer space. To that end, a modest aerospace development programme had been evolved.

5. At its last session, the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 35/14, had continued, as a matter of priority, its detailed consideration of the elaboration of draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. It was a source of regret to his delegation that, in spite of considerable efforts and after extensive negotiations, agreement on the draft principles had not been reached. There was an urgent need to achieve progress on that question in a manner that would truly reflect the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries.

6. The discussions on remote sensing of the earth by satellites in both sub-committees had not yielded any positive results. His delegation was of the view that data obtained from remote sensing should be made available to a sensed State on a timely and non-discriminatory basis and that certain categories of data should not be disseminated to third States without the prior consent of the sensed State.

7. His delegation realized that nuclear power was a reliable source of energy but believed that further efforts should be undertaken to examine safety regulations and to supplement the present norms of international law relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. His delegation believed that the working paper submitted to the Legal Sub-Committee by the delegation of Canada (A/AC.105/C.2/L.12(9)) would serve as a useful basis for discussion. The Philippines would support the continued consideration of nuclear power sources in both sub-committees.

8. His delegation believed that a special legal regime should be established for the geostationary orbit which would recognize its character as a common and limited resource of mankind and ensure its utilization for the benefit of all countries, particularly the developing countries.

9. His Government attached great importance to the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (Unispace 82) which would enable the international community to take stock of the achievements of the past decades and would provide a unique opportunity for further examining ways of strengthening

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(Mr. Caram, Philippines)

international co-operation in that field. The fact that his delegation had been one of the first to submit a national paper for the Conference was a manifestation of unqualified support for its success. His delegation fully endorsed the commendations contained in the latest report of the Preparatory Committee and hoped that all Member States would promote public awareness of the Conference through their mass media. The United Nations Department of Public Information, other organs of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations would have a key role to play in promoting the objectives and aims of the Conference. His delegation noted with pleasure that Indonesia would shortly be hosting a United Nations seminar on space applications in preparation for the Conference and for the benefit of the developing countries in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The Secretary-General of the Conference could not effectively perform his duties without the assistance of the necessary personnel, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations should make all the necessary appointments before the end of 1981 so that preparations for the Conference could proceed smoothly and expeditiously.

10. Mr. TORRES (Chile) said that through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space the United Nations should not only keep abreast of the advances in space science while promoting co-operation in the use of outer space, but should also establish the necessary legal norms ensuring that space activities reflected the will of all States to live in peace in accordance with the principles of international law. With regard to the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, his country was particularly interested in remote sensing of the earth by satellites. Chile had used that technique in numerous projects to promote its economic development. During the last session of the Sub-Committee, his delegation had participated with a group of States in proposing improvements in the format of the comprehensive remote sensing catalogue. He expressed the hope that in the future it would be possible to continue to increase the information which Member States submitted on their national activities in the field of remote sensing and that the range and distribution of the data compiled could be defined more clearly.

11. The programme on space application was an essential element in promoting co-operation and assistance in the use of outer space for development. He expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the implementation of the plans for 1981 and the preparations for the 1982 programme. His delegation expressed concern at the fact that the new Expert on Space Applications had not yet been appointed. Chile was particularly interested in the elaboration of draft principles governing the use by States of artificial satellites for direct television broadcasting with a view to the eventual conclusion of an international agreement in that field. During the last two years developing countries had made a special effort to bring about the adoption of such principles. However, a minority within the Committee which refused to accept such elements as the need for an agreement prior to the establishment of the service and the international responsibility which derived from such activities had thwarted efforts to reach general agreement. In view of the need for legal norms governing direct television broadcasting, Chile was prepared to continue its efforts to arrive at a consensus during the coming year. If the Committee was unable to reach

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(Mr. Torres, Chile)

agreement at its next session, the General Assembly should take whatever steps it considered appropriate in that regard.

12. With regard to remote sensing of the earth by satellites, his country reiterated its position that it was essential in the interests of developing countries that a notification system and a set of rules for the distribution of data which protected the interests of the sensed States should be considered. A State should have access on a priority basis to information on its territory and should be able to decide about the advisability of transmitting those data to third parties.

13. The Legal Sub-Committee should begin as soon as possible the elaboration of draft principles to supplement the norms of international law on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. It should also concentrate on the definition and/or delimitation of outer space, bearing in mind questions relating to the geostationary orbit. His delegation stressed the need to establish a conventional limit to outer space, promote a more efficient and rational use of the geostationary orbit in the interest of all States, and prevent the saturation of outer space.

14. It was regrettable that the preparatory work for Unispace-82 was complicated by the delay in the appointment of staff. He looked forward to the submission of the draft report on the Conference to be considered by the Preparatory Committee the following year.

15. In conclusion, he stressed the need to put an end to the arms race which was currently under way in outer space. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had an important role to play in that regard. The further elaboration of the norms contained in the Treaty of 1967 - for example, by signing an additional protocol, as had been proposed by the delegation of Italy - was one of the steps that must be taken.

16. Mr. BENA (Romania) said that his delegation viewed with satisfaction the progress achieved in the past year in the implementation of different national and international projects, among them the completion of a successful space mission by a Romanian cosmonaut.

17. Space activities had become a significant component in the efforts of States to find new resources to enable them to accelerate their economic and social development. In the light of the extremely rapid development of space science and technology, the results obtained by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had indeed been modest. The Committee's lack of success in elaborating the principles governing a number of important technical issues had led to the unacceptable situation where matters in outer space were decided on a "first come, first served" basis. That situation made it even more difficult to reach an equitable, just and coherent regulation of the use of outer space. Furthermore, the obligation which the Powers engaged in space exploration imposed on other States, namely, that of meeting a sizeable proportion of the expenditure of the former as a precondition for the use of satellites and laboratories or for access to data, accentuated their dependence and led to a new form of technological, economic and political domination. Immediate action was necessary to put a stop to that tendency and to initiate a new order in that domain.

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(Mr. Bena, Romania)

18. There were, at the same time, ever more marked tendencies towards militarization, the extension of the arms race to outer space and the increasing subordination of civilian space programmes to military control. His Government associated itself fully with the feelings of concern expressed by numerous delegations with respect to those tendencies. His delegation shared the opinion of many other delegations that the international community had the right and the responsibility to take concrete steps to deal with them.

19. Efforts should be made to ensure that advances in space techniques should not be used in a manner contrary to the basic principles governing relations between States, such as respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. It was not a matter of impeding technological progress, but of ensuring that such progress was used in the interests of strengthening friendship and co-operation between States. New techniques and their applications should not be misused and should not be allowed to bring about situations likely to affect normal relations between States or to provoke tensions and conflicts.

20. States whose territory was subject to remote sensing should have the right of access to the data obtained, and there was no scientific or ethical basis for limiting that indisputable right.

21. The new means of communication represented by the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting should become operational within the framework of a clear legal regime arrived at with the participation of all States. Such a regime should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, including those of respect for the sovereignty of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and full equality of rights, since there was a risk that those principles would not be observed in the present area. The observance of other principles, including that of the free dissemination of information, should not lead to the violation of the basic principles of international law embodied in the United Nations Charter. In order to maintain equality and defend such values as the sovereignty of States and their cultural and spiritual identity, it was necessary to establish as an important norm that the State receiving such transmissions should agree to do so. To ignore that principle would be to accept a glaring inequity stemming from the monopoly of an extremely small number of States with the means to carry out television broadcasting by satellite over a "right" of which the overwhelming majority of other States were deprived. It therefore seemed obvious that those other States, most of which were developing countries, should enjoy a minimum of legal guarantees that such broadcasts would not be directed against their legitimate interests and that those interests should at least be protected by the conclusion of agreements between the transmitting State and the receiving State stipulating the content of the broadcasts. His delegation believed that the draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for international direct television broadcasting, of which it had been a co-sponsor, met those requirements and ensured a balance between the rights and duties of States.

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(Mr. Bena, Romania)

22. Unispace 2 would afford the international community an exceptional opportunity to examine what the current possibilities were and how all countries could benefit from the peaceful uses of outer space. The Conference should therefore address itself to the earth applications of space technology with a view to allowing the developing countries unrestricted access to advanced space technologies and increasing the flow of assistance to such countries. That would enable the developing countries to build up their national capabilities with respect to outer space and would help to make international co-operation in that field more equitable and more useful for all nations.

23. Since it would bring together government representatives as well as representatives from the scientific and technological community, the Conference would provide a platform for an exchange of views on certain wide-ranging questions relating to the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and the prohibition of its use for military purposes. At a time when the world was short of raw materials, food and energy, space research could lead to solutions. The Conference must therefore be mindful of the benefits which could and should accrue to all countries, particularly the developing countries, from the use of current and future space technologies for development purposes. Any attempt to make the Conference a show-case for achievements that had no direct and practical effect on international co-operation must be resisted. The success of the Conference would largely depend on the extent to which it was responsive to the real needs of States and their aspiration to enjoy the benefits of the exploration of outer space. His delegation was convinced that if, in the preparatory process, all parties scrupulously respected the principles of independence and national sovereignty, full equality of rights, and participation by all States in the decision-making process, the objectives of the Conference would be attained. His delegation was determined to do its utmost to enable the Conference to promote the idea that outer space must become not an arena for confrontation resulting from the threat or use of force, but a common domain serving the interests of all States.

24. Mr. HUANG JIAHUA (China) said that the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had yielded results, particularly on questions relating to the promotion and development of international co-operation in outer space activities and the training of personnel from developing countries in space technology. It was hoped that the Committee would continue to achieve positive results in those respects in the future. With regard to direct television broadcasting by satellites, his delegation supported the negotiating text submitted by the 12 delegations. Of course, the elaboration of principles which took into account the interests of all sides was a complex and delicate undertaking which required further consultation. International direct television broadcasting by satellites should be carried out on the basis of such generally accepted principles of international law as respect for the sovereignty of States, which was an indispensable condition for international co-operation. That was the only way to ensure that such advanced technology would be utilized for the promotion of mutual understanding in the interest of international peace and security. Any unilateral or partial emphasis on the so-called "freedom of communication" without taking into account the sovereignty, interests or specific conditions of States would be difficult to put into practice and it would lead to all sorts of disputes. With

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(Mr. Huang Jiahua, China)

respect to the question of State responsibility, his delegation supported the formulation in the text of the draft principles that States should bear international responsibility for activities in the field of international direct television broadcasting by satellites carried out by them or under their jurisdiction. Any agreement between broadcasting and receiving States should cover not only the technical arrangements provided for in the relevant instruments of the International Telecommunication Union, but also the non-technical arrangements which had a bearing on the vital interests of the receiving State. That aspect should be duly reflected in the principle of consultation and agreement between States. It was imperative that the question of international direct television broadcasting by satellite should be resolved in the interest of all peoples in accordance with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and through consultations on a basis of equality and mutual benefit.

25. Unispace 2 would be an important forum for the promotion of international co-operation in outer space activities and would benefit all countries, particularly developing countries, by promoting the equitable access to outer space technology. His delegation appreciated the enormous amount of work done by the Preparatory Committee thus far and he expressed the hope that the outstanding issues concerning the election of officers and other organizational matters would soon be settled equitably in order to facilitate the preparatory process. Judging from the "national papers" submitted by States, more and more developing countries had made some initial progress in using space technology to explore and utilize their resources, forecast weather and facilitate communication and maritime navigation. However, because of financial, technical and other constraints, space technology in developing countries could not be more generally applied and many difficulties remained unresolved. It was hoped that the Conference would pay more attention to those aspects and, in addition to promoting wider dissemination of information on and exchange of outer space activities, would also focus on the promotion of international co-operation in that field, particularly in the development and application of space technology in developing countries.

26. His Government had always attached great importance to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space and had achieved some results in that area. It was currently carrying out a plan to develop the use of satellites in such fields as communications, broadcasting, meteorology and the exploration of resources, and expected to launch geostationary testing communication satellites in the near future. His country had successfully launched a group of space physics observation satellites in order to advance its research in space physics and space navigation technology. China would continue its efforts in the field of technology for the peaceful uses of outer space in the future.

27. Mr. LETYAGO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that in the 20 years since the first manned space flight on board the Soviet spacecraft "Vostok" space science had achieved remarkable results. The "Salyut-6" orbiting space station had been functioning successfully for four years, conducting a broad programme of research and experiments in the interest of science and the economy. Space science

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(Mr. Letyago, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

provided eloquent testimony of the fruitfulness of international co-operation in solving scientific and economic problems. The countries of the socialist community were making a significant contribution to the exploration and use of outer space for peace and progress. That was particularly true of the joint work carried out by specialists from socialist countries under the "Interkosmos" programme. In its 14 years of existence it had carried out a wide range of research projects using Soviet artificial earth satellites, geophysical and meteorological rockets, and ground observation systems. Large-scale scientific and industrial centres equipped with modern technology to carry out the tasks of that international outer space programme had been built in the countries participating in "Interkosmos." Thanks to the systematic implementation of that programme, numerous representatives from socialist countries had been launched into earth orbit.

28. Scientists from his country were making an important contribution in the field of space research and the peaceful uses of outer space. Scientific institutions of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences had carried out research by means of space craft in the field of remote spectrometry, the construction of equipment in space, meteorology and automatic data processing. That work was an integral part of national and international programmes. The Electronics Institute of the Academy of Sciences was participating in the Interkosmos space research programme in developing equipment and methodology for studying direct and dispersed solar radiation to be applied to research into ozone and aerosol concentration with the use of rockets. Experimental research in the optical characteristics of the upper atmosphere at a wide range of heights was also being conducted. That research was also being carried out under the Pigap programme.

29. Everything must be done to prevent outer space from becoming a new area of military confrontation. The plans for militarizing outer space conceived in the United States posed such a danger. Evidently the development of broad international co-operation for the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space did not suit those plans. That danger was particularly acute in view of the concept of the "limited" nuclear war espoused by the United States and it directly threatened the interests and security of all countries and peoples. His delegation considered that the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space, the draft text of which had been submitted by the Soviet Union as an agenda item of the current session of the General Assembly, would help to improve the international situation, strengthen trust and mutual understanding between States and promote the development of co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space by all States Members of the United Nations.

30. His delegation expressed satisfaction at the useful work the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had done in co-ordinating and promoting international co-operation. The report of that Committee indicated the future direction of international co-operation in the exploration of outer space. He reiterated his Government's position that direct television broadcasting to a foreign State should be carried out only on the basis of appropriate agreements with that State. Furthermore, data about the territory of a State received through remote sensing of the earth by satellites should be disseminated only with the consent of that State.

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31. Mr. BOUSHEV (Bulgaria) said that there was a growing recognition among Member States of the real benefits which all the peoples of the earth could derive from the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The conquest of space would continue to have an increasing impact on the life of every nation and on international relations.

32. The socialist countries had a global approach to space research, whether in the field of manned space flights or in the conquest of space for the purpose of solving scientific and practical problems. In 1981, those countries had scored remarkable successes and had undertaken new manned space flights with joint crews from the Soviet Union and Cuba, Viet Nam, Mongolia and Romania. He congratulated those crews on the successful execution of the flight programmes and on their considerable contribution to human knowledge through the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

33. Within the past year, Bulgaria had scored substantial successes in space exploration. It was continuing its space research activities within the framework of the "Intercosmos" programme and was actively participating in such other activities as space physics, space meteorology and remote sensing from space. With the assistance of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria had been able successfully to carry out its space programme entitled "Bulgaria-1300" on the occasion of the 1300th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian State. On 10 July 1981, the satellite "Meteor-Nature" had been launched into orbit from the Soviet Union, carrying on board a unique set of scientific instruments designed and manufactured by Bulgarian and Soviet specialists working on the space project "Bulgaria-1300-II." The conclusion of that project would have enormous scientific and practical significance. It would enable the scientific community to solve a host of important problems, including those pertaining to the future development of remote sensing by satellite.

34. On 7 August 1981, a new satellite - "Intercosmos-Bulgaria-1300" - had been launched from the Soviet Union, carrying on board scientific equipment designed and assembled by Bulgarian scientists and specialists in co-operation with Soviet scientists working on the space project "Bulgaria-1300." The new satellite was intended to continue the complex investigation of the physical processes taking place in the earth's ionosphere and magnetosphere.

35. The successful launching and the normal functioning of the satellites, as well as the carrying out of the entire "Bulgaria-1300" project, had been made possible by the highly effective co-operation between Bulgarian and Soviet scientists, by Bulgaria's successful development of electronics, computer technology and engineering, and by the over-all scientific, technological, economic and cultural progress made by Bulgaria. The fact that during the same period two satellites of the United States "Dynamics-Explorer" programme, the Western European "San Marco" satellite and the Franco-Soviet "Arkad" satellite had been launched testified to the significance and the necessity of satellite research. Thus, conditions had been created for a comprehensive study of the problems and for the promotion of co-operation among major scientific teams from various countries.

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(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

36. In the two and a half decades since the beginning of the space age, it had become clear that the earth was vulnerable from space and had to be protected. The socialist countries, and especially the Soviet Union, were particularly concerned to preserve the planet. It was the Soviet Union that had proposed the inclusion of item 128 in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Bulgaria resolutely supported the elaboration of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space.

37. Active international co-operation provided a sound basis for the exploration and use of outer space in the service of peace and human progress. The policy of detente, avoidance of confrontation between States and equitable co-operation was based on the principles of peaceful coexistence pursued by the socialist countries, including Bulgaria, and was designed to eliminate disputes, build mutual trust and bring about further successes in the peaceful uses of outer space.

38. Bulgaria was making preparatory arrangements for Unispace 2, to be held in 1982. The Conference should be a forum for reporting the accomplishments of States in space science and technology and, more importantly, should lay down guidelines for future activities. Substantial preparatory and organizational work for the Conference had already been done. His Government appreciated the personal commitment demonstrated by the Secretary-General of the Conference, who had recently visited Bulgaria and had had useful consultations on basic issues relating to the Conference.

39. Broad international co-operation, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect for the rights and interests of all countries, was essential to the success of space activities. However, at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, some States had tried to impose their views on the others. For the first time in its 24-year history, that Committee had failed to adopt the agenda of the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee or to decide on its opening date. Although it had failed to make significant progress or to reach agreement on several key issues, it had been discussing remote sensing of the earth by satellites for many years. His delegation shared the view of many other delegations that that question could and should be solved through the joint efforts of all Member States and that remote sensing of the earth by satellites should be carried out only on the basis of the broadest international co-operation, participation and respect for the rights and interests of all States.

40. Guided by that approach, Bulgaria had hosted a seminar on remote sensing applications in September 1981. It noted with satisfaction that about 40 lecturers and participants from many countries, as well as representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and other international organizations, had taken part. The main objective of the seminar had been to provide theoretical and practical training in remote sensing applications for geology, agriculture, forestry, hydrology and land resources management. The latest developments in remote sensing had been discussed in the context of the actual experience of countries in the use of satellite-based remote sensing data. Bulgaria believed that the seminar had definitely been a positive experience for the States that had taken part.

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(Mr. Boushev, Bulgaria)

41. Another outstanding problem before the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was that of direct television broadcasting by satellite. The principles governing such broadcasting must be aimed, first of all, at regulating the exchange of information and at encouraging all States to work to achieve greater mutual co-operation and confidence, as well as peace, international security and detente. If all Member States were ready to reach a political compromise, an agreement on those principles could probably be secured in the immediate future.

42. Bulgaria was one of the sponsors of a draft resolution which would soon be submitted to the Special Political Committee for its consideration. It believed that draft to be a reflection of the position of the overwhelming majority of Member States and to be conducive to further successful work by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees.

43. Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic) said that his country highly appreciated the efforts being made to promote the peaceful uses of outer space and the results of current research that benefited peoples and States. It felt, however, that comprehensive international research and co-operation would prosper only if the international community succeeded in creating appropriate pre-conditions for them through the strengthening and expansion of the process of detente, adherence to the accepted norms of international law and, in particular, the safeguarding of peace.

44. In the interest of the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it was essential to check the attempts being made in imperialist quarters to step up the arms race and revive the cold war. His delegation therefore welcomed the Soviet proposal regarding the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space. More than ever before, there were obvious schemes in imperialist circles to turn outer space into a new field in which to extend the arms race and boost space-related military programmes at the expense of the peaceful exploration of outer space. The Soviet proposal, on the other hand, was concerned with the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. That proposal was to be seen as part of the over-all effort by the Soviet Union and the other socialist States to promote disarmament, detente and peaceful co-operation. His delegation therefore welcomed the inclusion of item 128 in the agenda of the General Assembly and its allocation to the First Committee, as the Soviet Union had proposed.

45. Since the thirty-fifth session of the Assembly, there had been remarkable new scientific and technological achievements in outer space research. His delegation congratulated the Soviet Union on the results yielded by the peaceful research work undertaken with the "Salyut-6" space station. It also congratulated Mongolia and Romania on the successful missions of their research cosmonauts. Research cosmonauts from nine socialist countries had worked with Soviet cosmonauts in exploring outer space for the benefit of science and their national economies. More than 120 experiments had been carried out under the "Intercosmos" programme on board "Salyut-6." Owing to such joint efforts, the direct benefits from space flights were increasing from year to year.

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(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

46. His delegation also congratulated the United States of America, the Western European countries co-operating in the European Space Agency, India, Japan and China on the results of their space research activities. At the same time, it hoped that all those activities would indeed serve the cause of the peaceful uses of outer space.

47. In the past year, the German Democratic Republic had continued its activities under the "Intercosmos" programme and had been directly involved in 50 of the 120 experiments on board the "Salyut-6" spacecraft. The multispectral camera used during the flights of the Mongolian and Romanian cosmonauts had been jointly developed by the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. His country had also actively participated in the preparation of the scientific experiments carried out by the Mongolian cosmonaut and had helped to develop the scientific instruments installed on board the "Intercosmos-21" satellite launched in February 1981. With their colleagues from the Soviet Union, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, scientists from the German Democratic Republic had developed a satellite-based data collection system. In co-operation with Soviet scientists, his country's specialists had developed a multichannel spectrometer. The German Democratic Republic had been represented at the regional seminar held in Bulgaria in September 1981, in preparation for Unispace 2 and at the Rome congress held in September 1981.

48. One of the major unsolved issues before the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had to do with the elaboration of draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. Efforts to harmonize points of view and find compromise formulas had gradually been successful. That was reflected in the draft negotiating text submitted by 16 States. It had become apparent, however, that one delegation in particular was not prepared to accept the results which had been worked at jointly or to co-operate in completing the text. His own delegation reaffirmed its readiness to continue its active participation in the elaboration of an international convention on direct television broadcasting by satellite. The political will of all parties concerned was essential to success.

49. The German Democratic Republic agreed with the majority of members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that the proposed convention must respect the sovereign rights of States, adhere to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and guarantee the protection of the cultural heritage of States. The German Democratic Republic rejected the schemes hatched in certain quarters to misuse the new technology of direct television broadcasting by satellite to interfere with the sovereign rights of States, under the slogan of the "free flow of information." That new technology must not be allowed to become a vehicle for misinformation in the hands of the media monopolies of certain Western States. His country advocated the comprehensive application of the achievements of science and technology for the good of all States and all peoples. The international use of the new technical means must have a stable legal basis and would serve peace and benefit mankind provided that there were agreements in accordance with the accepted norms of international law

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(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

50. He reiterated his Government's position that the negotiations on remote sensing of the earth by satellites should be continued. It was essential to reaffirm the right of States to decide, at their own discretion, on the dissemination to third parties of remote sensing data concerning their territories. That would be in accordance with the principle of State sovereignty over natural resources.

51. His Government was grateful for the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, who had engaged in intensive and fruitful discussions during his recent visit to the German Democratic Republic. Inasmuch as so much preparatory work for the Conference remained to be done, his delegation was greatly astonished to see one side continuing to block such work. It wondered whether certain circles were really interested in the success of the Conference. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should make the required appointments by 31 December 1981 in order to ensure effective preparation of the Conference. His delegation joined others in believing that the Conference would be a significant event in the context of international co-operation in outer space research. It would give fresh impetus to the application of the results of the relevant research activities for the benefit of peoples and States. As in the past, the German Democratic Republic would continue to work actively and constructively for the preparation and success of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.