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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 27 October 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Joyini ..... (South Africa)

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(*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 48: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (continued)** (A/78/20; A/C.4/78/L.8)

1. **Mr. Belousko** (Russian Federation) said that, in order to preserve the practice of adopting draft resolutions on the peaceful uses of outer space by consensus in the Fourth Committee, the Russian Federation had decided to withdraw draft resolution A/C.4/78/L.5. The discussions in the Working Group of the Whole had demonstrated that delegations had substantial differences with regard to procedural aspects and the substance of the document. He thanked those delegations that had discussed the draft resolution constructively, in particular the co-sponsors.

2. Those delegations that had not taken a constructive approach to the draft resolution should note that the new phenomenon of using civil space systems, including commercial systems, for military purposes would, in all probability, threaten international peace and security. In the view of the Russian Federation, it would be wrong not to discuss the problem in the General Assembly. If the trend continued and delegations shut their eyes to it, he could not rule out having the issue considered in the Security Council. The matter concerned the common future of humankind; the Russian Federation and like-minded States would find a way of continuing to draw the international community's attention to it.

3. **Ms. Aljalalma** (Bahrain) congratulated the United Arab Emirates on its progress in the field of space and on the successful return from the International Space Station of its astronaut, the first Arab to complete a spacewalk. She said that States wanted to explore outer space and use it for peaceful purposes, applying space technology and science to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in many different areas. In that regard, international cooperation should be strengthened through the exchange of experience, best practices and knowledge.

4. Outer space must be a global commons and not a venue for an arms race. Bahrain had acceded to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and enhancing security and safety.

5. Her country had made many contributions to the main space-related bodies of the United Nations system in the technical and legal fields, and had participated in awareness-raising and capacity-building for the

implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Bahrain was an active member of the international space community and was firmly committed to the peaceful use of outer space in accordance with the principles of the United Nations space treaties.

6. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) said that the pace of human exploration and use of outer space was accelerating. Humanity would soon return to the Moon, and modern technology was enabling previously impossible activities, such as in-orbit servicing and manufacturing, debris removal and new ways of delivering existing services. Such endeavours brought opportunities to increase knowledge, grow economies, serve societies and protect the planet, but resulted in a need for greater cooperation and underlined the role played by the United Nations in the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space, as set out by the Secretary-General in "Our Common Agenda policy brief 7: for all humanity – the future of outer space governance" (A/77/CRP.1/Add.6).

7. The growing volume of space debris was unsustainable and must be cleaned up. Access to space must be maximized and the space environment preserved through responsible debris management and mitigation. International cooperation was required to consider the impact of satellites from launch to deorbiting, and novel technologies were needed to remove debris and extend satellite operation.

8. Nations new to space faced challenges in developing regulatory frameworks; their capacities in the field of space law must be strengthened, especially through the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space must continue to decide the future of space regulation. The implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities would permit the identification of gaps and challenges in that area.

9. **Ms. Lee Hyun Goo** (Republic of Korea) recognized the important role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as a forum for discussion and also the critical role of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in the implementation of the space treaties.

10. Her country had recently developed its Space Economy Road Map and its fourth National Space Development Basic Plan, which would promote private sector participation, expand exploration and advance space science. The Republic of Korea had its own launch vehicle, Nuri-ho, and a lunar orbiter programme, known as Danuri.

11. Her delegation welcomed the decision to convene a joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees. Although there was an important distinction between their spheres of work, the panel discussion would provide an opportunity for them to complement each other, without duplication.

12. So-called satellite launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were anything but a peaceful use of outer space. Any launch by that country using ballistic missile technology would permit advances in the technology needed for nuclear-weapons delivery. For that reason, the Security Council had, in a number of resolutions, clearly prohibited any activity using that technology. Such unlawful and threatening acts should not be tolerated, regardless of the false pretext provided by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

13. **Mr. Novicio** (Philippines) reaffirmed the commitment of the Philippines to all the principles underlying the space treaties. Through cooperation and collaboration, the global space community would advance knowledge to ensure the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space to the benefit of all.

14. His country's Space Act protected national interests and responded to regional developments. It focused on national security and development, hazard management and climate studies, space research and development, capacity-building, education and awareness, and international cooperation.

15. The National Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme for the Philippines had been launched with the assistance of the European Space Agency. A mirror site would be established in his country to disseminate Earth observation data in support of strategies to address climate change and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. The role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the promotion of international cooperation should be strengthened to ensure technical assistance for developing countries and to advance space activities through science and applications. It was important to bridge the technological divide between developed and developing countries through capacity-building and outreach related to sustainable development and climate change. The voluntary implementation of the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines should be increased to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of outer space, and any possibility of an arms race in outer space must be prevented through transparent confidence-building measures with a view to negotiating a multilateral instrument against the militarization of space.

17. **Archbishop Caccia** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the recent rapid development of space activities testified to the need to promote the peaceful uses of outer space through effective cooperation and a multilateral approach. The common good of humanity must take precedence over narrow national and commercial interests, and work must continue to build upon the principles set forth in the Outer Space Treaty.

18. The benefits of space exploration must be shared equitably among nations, particularly those with limited resources. The commercial use of space should not widen inequalities but should serve to promote integral development, scientific research and education. Environmental stewardship of the cosmos was critical; all spacefaring States had a duty to mitigate the risk posed by debris and to safeguard low Earth orbit and more remote regions of outer space.

*Draft resolution A/C.4/78/L.8: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space*

19. **Mr. Sharaf** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as Chair of the Fourth Committee Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, said that, at its two informal meetings held that week, the draft resolution entitled "Space technology for promoting peace" (A/C.4/78/L.5) had been withdrawn, in line with the Vienna spirit of consensus and compromise. A new paragraph 19 *bis* had been added to the draft resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/C.4/78/L.8) and read as follows:

Decides to convene a joint half-day panel discussion of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability, and to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session, under the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", a sub-item entitled "Joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability".

20. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

21. *Draft resolution A/C.4/78/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted.*

22. **Mr. Kim In Chol** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation categorically rejected the absurd

allegation of South Korea and strongly condemned that country's reckless misuse of the Fourth Committee to pursue a political agenda and incite a fratricidal confrontation. The launch of satellites was the exercise of a legitimate right of a sovereign State under the Charter of the United Nations and the Outer Space Treaty. In launching satellites, including reconnaissance satellites, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was exercising its right to self-defence in order to deter the ever-increasing number of hostile military acts carried out by the United States of America and its followers. Such launches were also intended to build self-defensive capabilities.

23. The call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by the unlawful resolutions of the Security Council, which had been reduced to an instrument of the aggressive United States strategy for world hegemony, was a brigandish demand to concede all sovereign rights to the United States, a belligerent party. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had never recognized and would never be bound by the Security Council resolutions against it, resolutions that infringed upon its rights as a sovereign State.

24. No one could deny that the United States and South Korea were turning the Korean Peninsula into the potential site of an immense thermonuclear war, while clamouring about the alleged end of the regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and waging joint exercises on the largest possible scale, including pre-emptive nuclear strikes. The world's peoples were witnessing the stark reality that United States strategic reconnaissance assets frequently intruded into the sky above the waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to reconfirm tracking and monitoring targets for such a strike.

25. No country would stand idly by while its security environment was gravely threatened. The more the United States and South Korea stepped up their hostile pressure and military threats, the more vigorously and courageously the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would exercise its legitimate rights as a sovereign State, including military reconnaissance satellite launches to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests. No one had conferred on South Korea the right to take issue with the right of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to launch a satellite, a right recognized under the Charter and the Outer Space Treaty. South Korea, which was running wild at the forefront of the implementation of the hostile policy against his country and committing serious hostile military acts against it, was not entitled to dispute its efforts to bolster its self-defence capabilities. The international community should increase its vigilance

and raise its voice against the grave danger posed by the unlawful, arbitrary attempts of the United States and its followers to prevent the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from exercising its sovereign right.

*The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.*