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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 31 October 1979
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic)

later: Mr. TUBMAN (Liberia)

CONTENTS

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

AGENDA ITEM 48: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 49: PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING (continued) (A/34/20; A/SPC/34/L.10-L.12)

1. Mr. JENKINS (Australia) observed that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had dealt with a large number of technically and politically complex issues during 1979 and that the important conclusions it had reached clearly reflected the goodwill of its members and their common objective of ensuring that the use of outer space was confined to peaceful purposes.

2. Since Australia was a large country with a relatively small population and extensive resources, it could benefit greatly from the peaceful use of space technology and was, in fact, making increasing use of such technology. His delegation had outlined Australia's space programme during the twenty-second session of the Outer Space Committee, but he wished to draw attention to the decision in principle taken by his Government in October to establish a national communications satellite system. That decision had been based on the fact that satellite communications offered the only feasible way to provide modern communications for the many Australians who lived far from densely populated areas. For other Australians who lived in less remote areas which were nevertheless isolated, satellite communications offered the only practical way to improve communications services and to permit access to a wider range of such services.

3. With regard to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/34/20), his delegation attached particular importance to the draft treaty relating to the moon. The perseverance of the members of the Outer Space Committee and their obvious desire to conclude such a treaty had made it possible to overcome many difficult problems and to finalize the draft treaty. Australia welcomed that achievement and was pleased to co-sponsor the resolution on the moon treaty submitted to the current Assembly.

4. With regard to the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, encouraging progress had been achieved; he noted, in particular, the agreement reached on the agenda for the Conference and on certain procedural questions. It was important, however, that the Outer Space Committee should continue to push those preparations toward and not succumb to the temptation to review, at a later date, decisions that had already been taken. To do so would almost certainly jeopardize the success of the Conference.

5. Referring to the question of direct television broadcasting by satellites, he noted that the 1979 session of the Legal Sub-Committee had provided an opportunity to make substantial progress on the relevant draft principles, thanks to a large extent to the constructive approach of the Swedish and Canadian delegations. However, his delegation had been disappointed at the outcome of the debate and urged members of the Outer Space Committee to approach that issue in future with greater determination to co-operate.

(Mr. Jenkins, Australia)

6. The important work accomplished by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was commendable, and the constructive spirit in which its work had been conducted had been reflected in the efforts of the Working Group of Experts on Nuclear Power Sources.

7. His delegation was somewhat disappointed at the progress made on the difficult and sensitive question of remote sensing of the earth by satellites. That subject was particularly important to Australia in view of its decision to establish a LANDSAT ground station, which was to become operational in early 1980. His delegation thought that remote sensing for scientific purposes was compatible with the provisions of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and it favoured a policy of allowing the freest dissemination of primary data that was consistent with the need to safeguard the legitimate economic and security interests of the sensed State. While such safeguards were essential, they should not be so restrictive as to impede the further development of remote sensing technology or to limit the recognized benefits that the world community derived from the remote sensing of the earth's resources.

8. The advantages of the geostationary orbit were well known, and countries that were becoming increasingly dependent on satellite communications and sensing, such as Australia, viewed the use of that orbit as particularly important. His country hesitated to recognize any claim of sovereignty over the orbit, since such a claim did not, in its view, have any scientific or legal foundation and would conflict with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty. However, States should co-operate on that question, and rational and equitable consideration must be given to the need to ensure that no country was excluded from the benefits derived from the geostationary orbit.

9. With regard to the question of the definition and/or delimitation of outer space, his delegation believed that, first and foremost, careful consideration must be given to the scientific, legal, technical and political factors involved. Perhaps the most important question was whether or not it was currently necessary to delimit outer space; if not, the imposition of an unnecessary legal régime could be avoided.

10. The need for constant co-operation among the members of the Outer Space Committee, to which he had referred repeatedly, was especially applicable to its negotiating process and went beyond the diplomatic process to include practical matters. The space Powers must co-operate with the international community on a wide range of outer space activities, particularly in connexion with advice and co-operation on the potential dangers of space craft. The importance of such co-operation and the potential dangers of the re-entry of craft that had not been programmed for such re-entry had been highlighted by the recent Skylab incident. The co-operation of the United States Government in providing Australia with complete, continuously up-dated information during the period before the re-entry had enabled the Australian Government to prepare for the possible need to provide emergency services. The space Powers should make a practice of such co-operation with the international community.

11. In conclusion, with regard to the structure of the Outer Space Committee's work in 1979, a number of delegations, including his own, had called for a review

(Mr. Jenkins, Australia)

of the Committee's working procedures with the aim of making its deliberations more effective and avoiding duplication of efforts. His delegation believed that it was essential for the Outer Space Committee to examine that problem carefully, and it would seek to ensure that such a review was undertaken in 1980.

12. As a co-sponsor of the three draft resolutions which were before the Special Political Committee, his delegation supported the principles and guidelines they contained, and he commended them to the Committee.

13. Miss FRANK (Netherlands) welcomed the fact that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, of which the Netherlands was a member, had been able to agree on the text of a draft agreement governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies. Her country appreciated the spirit of compromise shown by all delegations, which had made it possible to overcome the many problems. She expressed the hope that the draft resolutions before the Special Political Committee, which her Government had co-sponsoired, would be adopted by consensus.

14. The Outer Space Committee and its Legal Sub-Committee already faced another task in the field of international space law, in the wake of the two incidents involving the uncontrolled re-entry of space objects. The Committee must bear in mind the possible need to expand that body of law, and, in that connexion, her Government strongly endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 51 of the Committee's report (A/34/20). In response to the recommendation contained in paragraph 52 of the report, her Government would make known its views on the matter. In any case, it felt that the Legal Sub-Committee should already be starting work, for example, on a system for the registration of objects containing nuclear power sources or on the adoption of rules for notification in the event that such space objects malfunctioned.

15. Her Government welcomed the fact that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had estabished the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, which had already examined the technical and safety aspects of such power sources. Her delegation appreciated that work and fully supported the conclusions which the Group had reached. The delegation of the Netherlands to the forthcoming session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would again include an expert on nuclear energy, who would take part in the work of the Group of Experts.

16. She stressed that the goal of the Outer Space Committee's work was to ensure the peaceful use of outer space, and, in that connexion, she reiterated her country's concern about the threat presented by the further development of space technology. Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty prohibited the orbiting or stationing in space of any nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction, but unfortunately it did not preclude the development of other weapons that might be used, for example, to destroy other space objects. Her country hoped that the United States and the Soviet Union would continue their talks on that problem with a view to finding a solution. It felt that such instances of the non-peaceful use of outer space should eventually be discussed within the appropriate multilateral forum.

(Miss Frank, Netherlands)

17. With regard to the future work of the Outer Space Committee and its Sub-Committees, her delegation hoped that subsequent meetings of the Sub-Committees would give due consideration to the proposals contained in paragraphs 121 and 122 of the report of the Outer Space Committee. If meetings of the Sub-Committees were held simultaneously and the general debate at the beginning of such meetings was eliminated, their methods of work would be more efficient, and that would help to rationalize the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/34/320.

18. Her delegation was particularly interested in the development of remote sensing technology and its applications, and it wished to praise the work of the United Nations space applications programme in making such technology and its practical benefits available to the developing countries. The Netherlands had provided two lecturers on remote sensing for a United Nations-sponsored seminar which was to be held in Nigeria shortly. As to the dissemination of remote sensing data, her Government thought that many benefits were to be derived from the unlimited dissemination of such data.

19. With regard to the principles governing direct television broadcasting by satellites, her delegation continued to support the free exchange of information by television broadcasting and other media; it believed that any set of principles on direct television broadcasting should be based on that concept.

20. Her Government welcomed the progress made in 1979 in preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It felt that the Conference would be of the greatest benefit if it concentrated on specific items and stressed practical questions, such as the need to provide information and aid to the developing countries in connexion with the various forms of space technology. The Conference would also afford an opportunity to discuss the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space with countries that were not members of the Outer Space Committee, and her delegation looked forward to their contributions in that respect. She assured members that the Netherlands intended to prepare for that Conference carefully and to take an active part in its work.

21. Mrs. OLIVEROS (Argentina) reminded members that Argentina had participated actively in the work of the Outer Space Committee since its establishment in 1957. Her country had also been carrying out major programmes in the scientific and technical fields and in the field of training. For example, the Centro de Experimentación y Lanzamientos de Proyectiles Autopropulsados (CELPA) at Chamical was continuing its research through experiments with sounding rockets. She announced that the Centre was available for use by Argentina and international programmes of scientific and technical interest. With regard to the CELPA Atlantic Centre, she expressed her Government's appreciation for the valuable co-operation extended by the United Nations and for the renewal of that support. Sounding rockets, launched on a weekly basis from the Atlantic Centre, measured wind and temperature. The information obtained was disseminated through the Global Telecommunications System for use by the scientific community in analysing currents in the middle and outer stratosphere.

(Mrs. Oliveros, Argentina)

22. As for national activities in the field of remote sensing, she reported that they were growing steadily. For example, national and international meetings had been held recently in Argentina on such subjects as remote sensing applications in the evaluation of natural resources. She drew attention to the fact that on 14 August Argentina had signed an agreement with the United Nations to hold a training course on remote sensing for ECLA countries from 5 to 23 November 1979 at the San Miguel Space Centre.

23. In the context of horizontal co-operation, the "Castor-Peru" experiment, involving the launching of an Argentine rocket from Peruvian territory, had been completed. The Max Planck Institute in the Federal Republic of Germany and several United States organizations had participated in that experiment.

24. Turning to the question of direct television broadcasting by satellites, which was dealt with in the report of the Outer Space Committee, she expressed the view that the draft principles could be finalized. However, in addition to the need for freedom of information, delegations should bear in mind the need to respect the sovereignty and independence of States, the principle of non-intervention and the overriding importance of consultation among States.

25. As to the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, her delegation thought that part of the latter's next session should be devoted to questions relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and the use of the synchronous geostationary orbit.

26. With regard to the principles that should govern the remote sensing of the earth by satellites, Argentina believed that all activities involving natural resources should be conducted through co-operation and consultation among States and should be guided by the principle of the permanent sovereignty of States over their own natural resources and their right to free access to information about such resources. She also reiterated her delegation's support for any principles that would facilitate the transfer of technology to the developing countries and among developing countries with a view to closing the gap that separated the developed countries from the majority of the international community, since that was one of the best ways of advancing the cause of peace and justice in the world.

27. With regard to preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, her country welcomed the progress that had been made and endorsed the report of the Preparatory Committee (paras. 78-115 of the report of the Outer Space Committee (A/34/20)).

(Mrs. Oliveros, Argentina)

28. Lastly, with regard to the draft treaty relating to the moon, the sometimes seemingly irreconcilable differences of opinion that had been apparent from the outset had been overcome, proving once again that negotiations between States were the most effective way of dealing with such obstacles. The draft treaty reflected a good balance of the different interests in that connexion, and her delegation believed that both the developed and the developing countries could feel satisfied with its contents. The draft treaty also restored the credibility of the Outer Space Committee and showed that it was one of the most efficient United Nations organs, having drafted five extremely important international instruments in its relatively short existence. The treaty was also an excellent example of how to make headway in the progressive development of international law and its codification in accordance with Article 13 (a) of the Charter. In view of those considerations, her delegation hoped that the treaty on the moon would be approved by the current General Assembly and declared open for signature by States.

29. Mr. Tubman (Liberia) took the Chair.

30. Mr. SZELEI (Hungary) said that his Government was committed to participating as effectively as possible in international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and believed that the United Nations should play a primary role in co-ordinating international efforts which fitted into the framework of its activities. Hungary had increasingly participated in various international programmes for the peaceful exploration of outer space and continued to attach the utmost importance to INTERCOSMOS and INTERSPUTNIK, the international organizations of the socialist countries. A Hungarian cosmonaut was to join in one of the next INTERCOSMOS manned space flights.

31. The Hungarian space applications programme emphasized remote sensing of earth resources and the environment; test areas had been designated for research, and work was in progress to make use of satellite surveys for corrections to small- and medium-scale maps. Communications were also assuming increasing importance, and the Hungarian ground station was working on the INTERSPUTNIK space telecommunications system. Special emphasis was placed on the study of questions relating to the ground reception of direct satellite broadcasting and the compatibility of ground and satellite telecommunications systems. Hungary also participated in the work of other international organizations, such as COSPAR, IAF and WMO.

32. The international community was taking a growing interest in the peaceful uses of outer space. Successful manned space programmes had included the Soviet SALYUT-6 space station and the SOYUZ-33, manned by Bulgarian and Soviet cosmonauts. His delegation looked forward to the continuation of the manned space programme of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, as the wide range of findings derived from space flights was of special value to the international community.

(Mr. Szelei, Hungary)

33. Substantial progress had been achieved within the framework of the United Nations during the current year, despite the comlexity of the political, legal, scientific and technical issues dealt with by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. A consensus on the question of the draft treaty relating to the moon, originally proposed by the Soviet Union as early as 1971, had taken seven years of hard effort to achieve. His delegation was satisfied that the idea was useful and viable. The draft agreement governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies was a highly significant international legal instrument, and its adoption by the General Assembly would be an important step in the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter regarding the progressive development of international law and its codification. If the draft was adopted by the Assembly, his Government would be prepared to sign it as soon as possible.

34. He also welcomed the results of the work done in preparing for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. His delegation had already expressed its agreement with the proposed date of the Conference and reiterated its support for the offer by the Government of the USSR to host the Conference in Moscow.

35. His delegation agreed with the recommendation of the Outer Space Committee that the Legal Sub-Committee should continue, as a matter of priority, its work on elaborating principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. It was a matter for regret that the main lines of the proposal submitted by Canada and Sweden had not yet received the consensus support of the Legal Sub-Committee.

36. He supported the proposal of the Soviet Union for draft provisions for a General Assembly resolution on the delimitation of air space and outer space and on the legal status of the geostationary orbital space of satellites. He hoped that discussion of the matter at the next session of the Committee would be fruitful.

37. With regard to the working methods of the main Committee and its two Sub-Committees, his delegation strongly believed that they were useful and positive, and it hoped that the attempts to introduce change for its own sake would be abandoned.

38. Mr. VON WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies had made great strides over the past 12 months, particularly in successfully completing the draft agreement governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies.

39. Remote sensing of the earth by satellites was one of the areas of space technology where a transition from experimental to operational systems could be expected within a decade. His Government considered it to be an important contribution to the solution of world-wide problems such as environmental monitoring and therefore promoted research and development in that field under national and European programmes as well as co-operative projects to develop independent capacity for using the technology, especially in developing countries. Satellite remote sensing systems were global by their nature, and his Government therefore advocated that all States should be given access, on a non-discriminatory

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic of Germany)

basis, to the primary data of such satellites. In the quest for maximum global utilization of remote sensing technology, it was essential to increase international co-ordination of activities, especially through co-ordinated measuring programmes, agreed minimum technical standards and procedures, and the promotion of regional remote sensing centres with modern equipment and qualified staff, especially in less developed regions. His Government would like to see the Outer Space Committee receive a mandate to conduct studies on those subjects and to submit appropriate proposals. He was confident that the Committee would succeed in establishing draft principles on remote sensing which would be acceptable to all its members and to the world community.

40. It was essential that the inhabitants of the earth should not be harmed by the practical application of space science and technology, and his Government therefore welcomed the work of the special Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The exchange of expert knowledge and opinion in that area should be stepped up.

41. His Government welcomed the consensus achieved by the Committee on the text of the agreement governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies. By agreeing on rules at an early stage, it should be possible to avoid conflict. With regard to article III, paragraph 2, of the draft, it followed from the universal application of the prohibition of force as set out in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter that hostile acts which were prohibited on earth by international agreements were not permitted on celestial bodies, either. The prohibition of such hostile acts had also been incorporated into a number of international agreements, such as the Environmental Warfare Treaty and the Convention on Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons. The Committee was also to be congratulated on its preparatory work for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

42. In 1980, the Committee would continue work on the draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. His country adhered to the principle of the free flow of information in that field as in any other. Efforts must be made to reduce the existing imbalance of information between North and South by helping the developing countries to set up efficient news agencies and other media infrastructures so as to enable them to participate actively in a global exchange of information.

43. Among the space activities which had aroused interest during the past year were an outer space mission under the INTERCOSMOS programme, in which a cosmonaut from Bulgaria had joined one from the Soviet Union, and the missions of the American VOYAGER 1, VOYAGER 2 and PIONEER 11 spacecraft, which had relayed striking pictures from Jupiter and Saturn and provided invaluable information for scientists. His own country played a substantial part in the joint programme of the European Space Agency. Development of its two main projects, the SPACELAB space laboratory and the ARIANE launching vehicle, was nearing completion; the first SPACELAB pallet had been delivered to NASA, and the first experimental launching of ARIANE was scheduled for December. The two experimental Franco-German telecommunications satellites known as SYMPHONIE had been in operation for nearly five and four years respectively. The Federal Republic of Germany was also participating in the establishment of the European regional communications

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic of Germany)

satellite system ECS, for which an agreement had been concluded on 15 May 1979 between ESA and the Interim Entelsat, representing 17 European postal administrations. Studies had also been carried out in preparation for a decision on implementing a pilot programme for a direct-transmission radio satellite. His Government supported the ESA's plans for the programme, which was to be co-ordinated internationally with other similar projects. METEOSAT, the European contribution to the Global Atmospheric Research Programme, was a weather satellite providing weather photographs which were broadcast daily in German television news programmes. International co-operation also prevailed in extraterrestrial research, such as the German-American HELIOS solar probes, which made it possible for solar data to be obtained over a period extending from a point of minimum solar activity until the expected peak of sunspot occurrence in 1980. ESA had just commissioned a European industrial consortium, headed by a German company, to develop one of the two probes for the International Solar Polar Mission, which was a joint ESA-NASA programme.

44. Mr. ROSLYAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that mastery of outer space was among the global problems which affected the whole of mankind and could be expected to exert an increasing influence on nations and on international relations. The global approach was central to the outer space programmes of the Soviet Union, both in its manned space flights and in its missions to explore outer space for scientific or practical purposes.

45. In Soviet manned space flights, efforts were concentrated on perfecting extended-performance orbital space stations with interchangeable crews capable of solving a variety of pure and applied problems. The SALYUT-6 space station had contained a special range of equipment, including the PROGRESS space transport craft. In August 1979, the longest-ever manned space flight, lasting 175 days, had been achieved by the SALYUT-6-SOYUZ team. The cosmonauts Lyakhov and Ryumin had carried out complex experiments in space physics, meteorology, biology and medicine as well as studies of the natural resources of the earth. That and other recent Soviet missions had been particularly concerned with the applied aspects of space exploration. Work on the SALYUT-6 orbital station had been international; cosmonauts from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic had taken part in INTERCOSMOS programmes on the station during 1978. In the same year, Soviet and Bulgarian cosmonauts had manned a flight on SOYUZ-33. Materials used on the SALYUT-SOYUZ expedition had been supplied by France. Cuban, Hungarian, Mongolian, Romanian and Vietnamese cosmonauts would be joining Soviet cosmonauts on future missions.

46. Much of the Soviet space programme was devoted to experiments of potential future application to the economy. Space flights and technology were increasingly being used to study the earth's natural resources. Space surveys and photographs could be used in agriculture and forestry, e.g. in determining the extent of forest fires and planning preventive measures. Soviet space missions for such purposes included the flights of Cosmos-1010, Cosmos-1033 and Cosmos-1106. A special ocean survey had also been carried out by Cosmos 1076.

(Mr. Roslyakov, USSR)

47. The second Indian satellite, whose findings in relation to the earth's natural resources would be of particular value to the Indian economy, had been launched in the Soviet Union on 7 June 1979 with the aid of a Soviet rocket launcher. The METEOR weather satellite was successfully relaying information used for weather forecasting, and Soviet weather satellite information was used by meteorological services in many countries. The GORIZONT telecommunications satellite had been launched in December 1978 and would be used in 1980 to relay television broadcasts from the twenty-second Olympic Games. Three Soviet communications satellites were already relaying television programmes to remote areas of the Soviet Union, and by 1978 the number of ORBIT stations had reached 84. The INTERSPUTNIK international communications satellite system was also developing satisfactorily. Apparatus on the COSMOS-1000 navigation satellite was designed for the elaboration of a navigational system for Soviet oceangoing and fishing vessels throughout the world.

48. Both in the economic applications of space technology and in the fundamentals of space research, the Soviet Union was co-operating widely with other countries, and successful joint experiments had been carried out for many years with the socialist countries through the INTERCOSMOS space programme and also with France, India and Sweden. The Soviet Union was continuing to co-operate with the United States in the field of space biology and medicine and in the exchange of research data relating to the moon and planets.

49. An increasing role was being played by international law in regulating the activities of States in outer space. The basic legal instrument in that field was 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. It had been followed by three other major agreements: the 1968 Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the 1972 Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, and the 1975 Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. It was of the greatest importance that those instruments should be ratified by a larger number of States.

50. The draft agreement governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies, initiated in 1971 on a proposal of the Soviet Union, was a meticulous and balanced document which met the needs of all countries, irrespective of their level of economic development and degree of participation in outer space activities. In the view of his delegation, the draft should be adopted and opened for signature without further amendment.

51. The Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would take place in less than three years' time. It would assess the developments in outer space technology which had occurred over the previous 25 years and would play an important role in strengthening the co-operation of States in the mastery of outer space. He was also convinced that it would improve the international climate and strengthen détente in international relations. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, had played a key role in its organization. The Soviet Union would continue to play an active part in the work of preparation. At the last session of the Committee, the Soviet Union had expressed its willingness to host the Conference in Moscow in 1982.

(Mr. Roslyakov, USSR)

52. For seven years, the Committee had been working on draft principles for remote sensing of the earth by satellites. Remote sensing had considerable practical value for many States in dealing with a range of economic problems, and it was becoming increasingly necessary to devise a universal international instrument to regulate the activities of States and foster international co-operation in that field. Space technology had already reached a level where high-quality photographs of the earth's surface could be taken by satellite, and some of the information they contained could affect the national interests of the States whose territory was photographed. The Soviet Union therefore took the view that space photographs of the territory of foreign States should not be freely disseminated and should only be transmitted to third States with the express agreement of the State concerned. That position should be affirmed in the principles elaborated by the Committee.

53. Since 1972, the Committee had been working on draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. Now that the development of technology had made it possible to use artificial earth satellites for that purpose, an agreement under international law governing the practice should be completed as quickly as possible. Direct television broadcasting must be used in the interests of peace and security, to foster mutual understanding and détente, and to enrich human culture. Unfortunately, however, certain forces might seek to use direct television broadcasting for the purpose of interfering in the internal affairs of States or disseminating aggressive or racist propaganda. The draft principles elaborated by the Committee must contain a clear and unambiguous provision to the effect that direct television broadcasting to a foreign State should be carried on only by specific agreement with that State.

54. Another important problem being considered by the Committee required urgent solution. Mankind had been exploring outer space for almost a quarter of a century, but States had not yet been able to agree on a definition of outer space for legal purposes. In the Committee, the Soviet Union had proposed a boundary for outer space at 100 to 110 km above sea level, below which States would retain the right to carry on flights in foreign air space for the purpose of entry into orbit or into outer space. His delegation did not, however, intend to propose an automatic fixed boundary between air space and outer space; the question should be exhaustively discussed until an agreed basis was reached for an international treaty.

55. The Committee was also considering the question of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Soviet Union was participating in the work of the expert Working Group on the subject established by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. It was also prepared to participate in consideration at the question of a "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 uses of nuclear power sources in outer space", which the Committee had recommended for inclusion in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee. The Committee had made a number of useful recommendations to the General Assembly on the various other important matters on its agenda, and he hoped that those recommendations would be adopted.

56. Mr. COTTON (New Zealand) congratulated the Outer Space Committee on the draft moon treaty and on the series of detailed recommendations concerning the organization and agenda of the Second Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

57. When adopted and open for signature, the draft treaty, which laid down guidelines for the conduct of States on the moon and other celestial bodies, would represent significant progress in international co-operation. The achievements of brave cosmonauts and astronauts from a small number of States had been made not for national advantage but for the benefit of all mankind. He thought that the preparation by the Outer Space Committee of the draft agenda for a Second Conference on Outer Space had struck exactly the right balance between a cosmic survey of the universal benefit of space and a detailed study of the legal and political issues, and he therefore supported the draft agenda and the recommendations for the Conference arrangements. He noted, however, that the Committee's work had not yet been completed in regard to the questions of remote sensing, the delimitation of outer space, the geostationary orbit and direct television broadcasting by satellites.

58. Outer space was of importance not only to the developed countries and the space Powers but to all States. Although New Zealand was an agricultural country and not a space Power, the New Zealand Department of Scientific Research as well as other government departments and universities had taken a keen interest in the LANDSAT programme for the remote sensing of resources and had developed a capability to analyse and process LANDSAT data and obtain high-quality imagery. A committee of users of such data had been set up under the Minister of Science to study the effects of remote sensing in relation to New Zealand. His country had assisted other Pacific countries in processing their imagery, and he hoped that the LANDSAT programme would be continued. As yet, no operational system had been developed involving user countries of LANDSAT, as had been done for INTELSAT and INMARSAT. He hoped that progress would be made the following year in the Committee's work on the classification and dissemination of data.

59. He supported the work of the Legal Sub-Committee in preparing draft principles governing direct television broadcasting from outer space. In the Pacific area, the PEACESAT programme, which involved radio rather than television broadcasting, had been operating for the past eight years, during which time it had developed from a simple linkage between terminals in Hawaii and New Zealand through NASA's ATS-1 satellite into a network linking 13 island countries. It was a demonstration project designed to study the benefits of direct conference communications between groups with common interests. Co-operating institutions in the various independent island States in the Pacific were linked by low-cost, self-contained radio terminals and a communications satellite relay. The experimental work was available for use by persons and institutions involved in research, education, health and other community services with a view to mutually beneficial co-operation. Since it often represented the only feasible means of consultation between people who shared common interests and problems but lived in States remote from one another, PEACESAT had considerable social and educational value for the vast Pacific region.

(Mr. Cotton, New Zealand)

60. He supported the three draft resolutions that were before the Committee and hoped that they would be adopted by consensus.

61. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that he hoped to complete the general debate on items 48 and 49 at the meeting to be held the following afternoon; the list of speakers would therefore be closed at the end of the morning meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.