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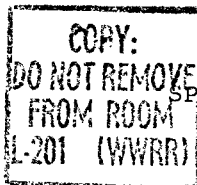
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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
43ra meeting
held on
Tuesday, 26 November 1985
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/40/99, A/40/272; A/SPC/40/3)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)
(A/40/20 and Corr.1)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE: REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/621 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. ELAIGWU (Nigeria) said that it was gratifying to note that some developed countries were promoting the training of outer space experts in developing countries in telecommunications, satellite meteorology and remote sensing. His delegation also noted with interest the two workshops on space science and technology to be held in 1986 in Mexico and Africa, as well as the plans for workshops in 1986 and 1987 for the Pacific and Caribbean regions. It endorsed the view expressed in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/40/20) that the Secretariat and the Expert on Space Applications had carried out their tasks efficiently, and it supported travel by members of the Secretariat to raise voluntary contributions for implementation of the programmes.

2. Remote sensing activities were of great benefit to the developing countries, especially in monitoring desert encroachment. The expression of support in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee for programmes to help the countries affected by desert encroachment was very welcome. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would give the Sub-Committee a mandate to discharge its duties in that area effectively at its 1986 session and that the United Nations would continue to co-ordinate assistance to developing countries in the use of remote sensing to solve environmental problems. It was to be hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee would be able to agree on recommendations at its next session concerning the draft principles relating to remote sensing.

3. His delegation commended the work already done in response to resolution 37/90, in which the General Assembly had endorsed the recommendations of the second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) concerning goals for the Space Applications Programme. It hoped that the Programme's other activities would be vigorously pursued for the benefit of all States and of the developing countries in particular.

4. His country's position on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space remained unchanged. It should be the responsibility of the launching State to initiate measures to mitigate harmful effects of unplanned re-entry of space vehicles carrying nuclear power sources. Moreover, it was the general view that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should give specific attention to the needs of developing countries in that field.

5. Nigeria was opposed to the appropriation by any State of any segment of the geostationary orbit, which was the common heritage of mankind. The facilities of the orbit should be more equitably allocated for the benefit of all countries.

(Mr. Elaigwu, Nigeria)

6. The arms race in outer space was a proper topic for consideration by COPUOS. His delegation supported the retention of the item entitled "Ways and means for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes", since discussion of the subject in COPUOS would complement the work of other forums. It reaffirmed its opposition to the militarization of outer space. It agreed that communication satellites should have some safety guarantees, and it appreciated the contribution made by the ARABSAT and BRASILSAT programmes to the expansion of the peaceful uses of outer space.
7. He thanked the Outer Space Affairs Division for organizing the successful Seminar on Remote Sensing Technology in National Development, held in Nigeria in April. The seminar had made a number of proposals, including the establishment of a national centre for remote sensing in Nigeria. Work was already under way to implement the proposals.
8. Mr. LAGORIO (Argentina) said that the harnessing of space technology in the development strategy of the developing countries was one of the challenges of the times. The consensus obtained at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly had engendered a conciliatory atmosphere in COPUOS which his delegation hoped would facilitate substantial progress in the near future. The question of the remote sensing of the earth was of particular importance, and the Legal Sub-Committee should now be able to reach an agreement on the draft principles submitted by Austria (A/40/20, annex V).
9. His country remained deeply concerned about the militarization of outer space and it condemned not only the stationing of weapons in outer space but also the use of geostationary satellites for any purposes other than exclusively peaceful ones. The Delhi Declaration (A/40/114) reflected his country's position very clearly. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty had established unambiguous guidelines for future work on outer space, but it now needed to be supplemented by new instruments.
10. His delegation fully supported the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. Scientific and technological development was opening up new areas at present beyond the control of the international community. The legal regulation of such activities must take into account all the principles embodied in the 1967 Treaty. Co-operation in outer space activities should be developed for the benefit of the whole international community, and particularly of the technologically less advanced countries.
11. The definition and delimitation of outer space was necessary for the purposes of establishing the sphere of application of the legal régime for outer space. COPUOS must also continue its work on the geostationary orbit, in order to produce regulations for the use of the orbit for the benefit of all nations. Similarly, COPUOS must speed up its work on the question of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, with a view to defining the responsibilities of the operators of that technology.
12. Now that the restoration of consensus had produced a number of generally acceptable agreements, the Special Political Committee must move on to the second stage and demonstrate the political will to implement them.

13. Mrs. MARTIN (Canada) reviewed her country's national and international work in the development and application of space technology, noting in particular that the "CANADARM" remote manipulator system aboard the United States space shuttle had demonstrated the potential of technology to change the ways of operating in space.

14. In March 1985 her Government had reaffirmed that international co-operation would remain a corner-stone of its space policy. The trend towards international collaboration in space was gaining ground, and UNISPACE 82 had reaffirmed the role of COPUOS as the focal point within the United Nations system for international co-operation. COPUOS had three tasks: to make developments in space science known to the wider community of nations; to promote international co-operation; and to develop concerted approaches to outer space issues. The pessimism which had prevailed in 1983 concerning the future of outer space activities in the United Nations had been premature, and the return in 1984 to the tradition of consensus in COPUOS offered real hope of progress.

15. Her delegation congratulated the Expert on Space Applications and his staff on their effective use of limited resources in the Space Applications Programme.

16. It was confident that the Legal Sub-Committee would soon be able to reach agreement on the draft principles on remote sensing and it noted the progress made by both Sub-Committees on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, on which agreement could also be expected in the near future. It welcomed the reformulation of the agenda item for the Legal Sub-Committee to reflect the goal of elaborating legal principles for the use of nuclear power sources. It was important for the ambitious work programme on the item undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that it should continue in parallel with the work in the Legal Sub-Committee, for there must be scientific and technical guidelines to ensure human and environmental safety when nuclear power sources were used. The best way of carrying the work forward was to reconvene the Working Group of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

17. There was a general will to inject new life into the work of COPUOS. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, for example, had already taken steps to enhance the scientific content of its work. Other constructive action had been taken, but it was clearly not enough. COPUOS must seriously consider the revitalization of its agenda and reorganization of its work. If that was not done, COPUOS might lapse into an irrelevant routine instead of keeping pace with the exciting developments in space.

18. Mr. RADENKOVIC (Yugoslavia) welcomed the fact that the co-operation organized by the United Nations in outer space activities had contributed to the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of all mankind. The five important treaties and the other legal documents adopted by the United Nations demonstrated the value of the work of COPUOS. The United Nations and COPUOS did indeed have a vital role to play in international co-operation to make the achievements of space science available to all countries.

19. The complete demilitarization of outer space was a condition for successful co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. His delegation shared the general concern about the extension of the arms race to outer space, and it

(Mr. Radenković, Yugoslavia)

undertook to work for the preservation of outer space as the common heritage of mankind to be used for exclusively peaceful purposes. COPUOS had a duty to examine ways and means of attaining that goal. International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space could also help to improve international relations and reduce tensions.

20. Important work had been done under the Space Applications Programme, but more progress was needed, especially with respect to the needs of the developing countries in the utilization of space technology. The implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 in that area had been slow and must be speeded up.

21. His delegation appreciated the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee but thought that much more could be done, especially with respect to the extension of international co-operation. Greater efforts must be made in the transfer of space science and technology, especially to the developing countries. More attention should also be given to training personnel in the developing countries.

22. The Legal Sub-Committee had produced important results in the regulation of some issues, which gave hope of greater progress in the future, in particular on the draft principles relating to remote sensing. The benefits of remote sensing must be made available to all States.

23. The limited resources of the geostationary orbit must be used more rationally and in the interests of all countries, especially the developing countries, which at present had little or no possibility of using the orbit. The utilization of the geostationary orbit was a question for the International Telecommunication Union, but the Legal Sub-Committee could also contribute to establishing the basis for legal regulation.

24. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that the development of space activities called for widespread international co-operation as well as an adequate legal framework. The maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes was a task for the whole international community and offered enormous possibilities for co-operation. COPUOS and its Sub-Committees had contributed to strengthening international co-operation and to the establishment of legal rules and principles to facilitate space activities. The rapid growth of space activities had made the role and responsibility of COPUOS even greater, especially with respect to the developing countries, which wished to participate equitably in the revolution in space technology.

25. The Legal Sub-Committee had made important progress in carrying out its mandate. The legal implications of remote sensing of the Earth from space were particularly important for developing countries. In that connection, he stressed that remote sensing activities must be carried out with account taken of the interests of developing countries and the need to respect the sovereignty of States over their resources. Furthermore, developing countries must be given access to data on their territories under reasonable conditions. The draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space proposed by Austria (A/40/20, annex V) could constitute a good basis for consensus. It was hoped that the draft

(Mr. Zahid, Morocco)

principles would be adopted at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee and that agreement would be reached on procedures for adapting or supplementing the principles in order to keep pace of new developments in science and technology. The elaboration of a declaration on that subject would be a positive step.

26. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the question of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space had been given serious consideration by both Sub-Committees. In that regard, his delegation expressed the hope that the Legal Sub-Committee could reach consensus on the formulations regarding notification prior to re-entry of a space object with nuclear power sources on board and assistance to States.

27. The elaboration of legal principles and norms governing equitable use of the geostationary orbit was increasingly urgent in order to meet the needs of developing countries, since that limited natural resource was dominated by a small group of countries. Furthermore, the difficulties encountered by developing countries in obtaining access to space science and technology constituted a major obstacle to their use of the geostationary orbit. With the necessary political will on the part of its members, the Legal Sub-Committee would succeed in formulating a special legal framework which would take account of the needs of developing countries in that regard.

28. The lack of resources was still a serious obstacle to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. It was hoped that the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications would be expanded in order to benefit the greatest number of countries. Regional and interregional co-operation should be strengthened within the framework of technical co-operation between developing countries and the United Nations system, and the industrialized countries should assist developing countries in that regard. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the three studies recommended by UNISPACE 82 had been carried out. It was hoped that further studies would lead to concrete projects which would enable developing countries to participate more actively and equitably in space activities.

29. Space activities could do much to improve living conditions provided that outer space was kept free of conflict and was used solely in the interest of mankind. COPUOS and other bodies involved in space activities had an important role to play in that regard.

30. Mr. NUÑEZ MARTIN (Cuba) said that it was in the interest of all peoples to reach agreement on legal and political instruments governing the peaceful use of outer space. The report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/40/20) showed that little progress had been made. The efforts to militarize outer space should be denounced, and appropriate action must be taken to prevent the militarization of outer space. Programmes such as the Strategic Defense Initiative would turn outer space into a source of danger for all mankind. The existing strategic military balance should not be altered, and steps must be taken to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space. The peoples of the world were demanding that agreement should be reached in order to reduce conventional and nuclear arsenals and ensure true peace.

(Mr. Nuñez Martin, Cuba)

31. It had been stated repeatedly that the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament were the competent multilateral forums for discussing the question of preventing the militarization of outer space. It was paradoxical, therefore, that the delegation of the United States had been the only one in the First Committee to vote against draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.68/Rev.1 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Paragraph 9 of that draft resolution requested the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space. If agreement could not be reached in the bodies described as the competent multilateral forums for dealing with that question or in COPUOS, it should be asked what multilateral forum could discuss the question of preventing the militarization of outer space. An answer must be found. The dangers inherent in an arms race in outer space made it necessary to search for bilateral and multilateral negotiating forums where agreements could be adopted.

32. It was hoped that at its next session the Legal Sub-Committee could reach final agreement on draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space which would take account of the just demands of developing countries in that field. Furthermore, progress should be made in the definition and delimitation of outer space and rules governing the utilization of the geostationary orbit, which could not be subject to national claims of sovereignty. The utilization of the geostationary orbit, which was a limited natural resource, should take into account the needs of the developing countries. It was hoped that progress could be made with regard to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, on the basis of the necessary security requirements. His delegation did not support the proposals for revitalizing the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space because they did not pursue clearly defined objectives and tended to weaken the work of the Committee.

33. Mr. ALLAGUI (Tunisia) stressed the need for effective and flexible legal principles governing outer space activities. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty had constituted a new international legal régime guaranteeing all States freedom to explore and use outer space under conditions of equality and in accordance with international law. That Treaty, however, had not determined the altitude at which outer space began. Accordingly, his delegation stressed the need for a rule establishing that altitude which would be binding on all States.

34. The United Nations was the only organization capable of developing international space law. He therefore emphasized the need to strengthen international co-operation to ensure that outer space was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. UNISPACE 82 had stressed that outer space must be used solely for peaceful purposes and that space activities having military purposes were in violation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. It was estimated that at the current time 75 per cent of the satellites in outer space had been stationed there for military purposes. Furthermore, outer space was being used in order to conduct anti-satellite weapon tests and plans were being made to station an anti-missile defence system in outer space. The militarization of outer space would lead to an unbridled arms race whose consequences would be irreversible. Tunisia reaffirmed its commitment to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which clearly prohibited the stationing of any weapons, including nuclear weapons, in outer space.

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(Mr. Allagui, Tunisia)

35. Remote sensing of the Earth from outer space had numerous practical applications which could be of great benefit to all mankind. Steps should be taken to ensure that the gap between the industrialized and the developing countries in that regard did not increase. International co-operation with regard to space technology could considerably accelerate development. Such co-operation must promote the application of the results of scientific progress, which were the common heritage of all mankind. The question of the geostationary orbit and its character as a limited natural resource should be considered with the utmost care, and account must be taken of the interests of developing countries in that regard.

36. Tunisia attached particular importance to the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. A recent seminar held in Tunis in November 1985 had dealt with the question of communication satellites, which was one of the areas of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. In view of the information provided in the report of COPUOS (A/40/20), his delegation expressed the hope that the Committee would be able to make considerable progress before the next session of the General Assembly, and that dialogue would continue in order to promote international co-operation.

37. Mr NDONGO (Congo) said that the future of civilization on Earth would depend, to a large extent, on the way in which men made use of space, and that its peaceful use was dependent upon co-operation between States. All States Members of the United Nations should work to ensure the preservation of peace in outer space, as it was only thus that development could be assured. His delegation accorded particular attention to the search for ways and means which might permit man to make use of the exploration of space for the resolution of problems on Earth, including fields noted in the report of COPUOS (A/40/20).

38. It was vital to establish clear legal frameworks to govern co-operation between States in the peaceful use of outer space. It was particularly important to ensure the transfer of technology to developing countries and the training of personnel who might be capable of dealing with the intricacies of activity in space.

39. The threat of nuclear confrontation had recently been heightened by the increased use of technological progress for the militarization of outer space. It was regrettable that so much money and energy should be devoted to non-peaceful uses of space, when such resources should be used to overcome difficulties created by the ever-increasing gap between developed and developing States. His delegation expressed its serious concern at the unending spiral of the arms race.

40. The General Assembly had given COPUOS the task of exploring areas of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, of formulating programmes to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, of encouraging research and its dissemination and of studying legal problems created by the exploration of space, and the Committee had recorded some undeniable successes in those fields. However, much remained to be done, particularly with regard to the delimitation of space and to the elimination of the threat of a world war or a nuclear war. The relentless course of the arms race, particularly between the super-Powers, was not conducive to the promotion of fruitful co-operation

(Mr. Ndongo, Congo)

between States in the peaceful use of outer space, and it was necessary instead that an atmosphere of confidence and mutual respect should be established between all countries. It was for that reason that his delegation supported the work of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. It also expressed its satisfaction at the renewal of negotiations between the two super-Powers at Geneva. Given that the United Nations had been established in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, he called upon all to demonstrate their wish to join efforts to put an end to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to use the immense potential offered by space for the purposes of peace, security, co-operation and development.

41. Mr. LUPINACCI (Uruguay) reiterated his delegation's support for the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and expressed satisfaction at its contributions in the field of scientific co-operation and space law. The possibility of the militarization of outer space was cause for grave concern for the international community. COPUOS should contribute, within its sphere of competence, to efforts to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes by considering concrete steps to be taken and identifying activities which ran counter to that objective. COPUOS should carry out that task in co-ordination with the Conference on Disarmament. In that connection, he reiterated his Government's support for the position taken at UNISPACE 82 concerning the use of outer space for military purposes.

42. Uruguay considered the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space proposed by Austria (A/40/20, annex V) a good basis for negotiation. Although the text required certain changes, it could be adopted by COPUOS in 1986 and submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-first session. The text contained a number of fundamental principles, particularly the principle that remote sensing activities should be carried out for the benefit of all countries and on the basis of respect for the principle of full and permanent sovereignty of all States and peoples over their own wealth and natural resources. The right of States to access to primary processed data concerning the territory under their jurisdiction would be clearly established. His delegation generally supported the principle of consultations between the sensing and the sensed States. Nevertheless, the obligation of the sensing State to give the sensed State opportunities for participation should be more clearly formulated.

43. The principle that States operating remote sensing satellites should bear international responsibility for their activities and ensure that such activities were conducted in accordance with the relevant principles and norms of international law was also of great importance. Uruguay supported the principle that remote sensing should promote the protection of the Earth's natural environment and the protection of mankind from natural disasters. In that regard, the timely availability of relevant data was essential in order to ensure strict compliance. Lastly, his delegation stressed the importance of the principle of international co-operation and the peaceful settlement of disputes in conducting remote sensing activities.

44. With regard to the use of nuclear power sources, progress had been made on notification prior to re-entry of a space object with nuclear power sources on

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(Mr. Lupinacci, Uruguay)

board and assistance to States. His delegation stressed the need for the speedy adoption of norms and principles in that connection in view of the accidents which had occurred involving satellites with nuclear power sources. Such norms should establish the obligation of States to provide information on the use of such space objects, give assistance to States affected by such activities, establish security measures concerning the use of nuclear power sources and clearly define the liability of States for any damage caused by the use of such objects. Furthermore, his delegation stressed the need to formulate international criteria for the design and functioning of space objects with nuclear power sources on board and develop the concept of the safe nuclear orbit in order to reduce the risks of discharging radioactive material in the atmosphere. Limits should also be placed on the minimum useful life of a nuclear power source in orbit. His delegation attached particular importance to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit. COPUOS and the International Telecommunication Union should reach agreement on general principles concerning the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit, which should be defined as a limited natural resource and subject to a special legal régime taking into account the future needs of developing countries.

45. Much remained to be done in further developing international space law in order to keep pace of scientific and technological progress and protect the sovereignty and independence of all States. What had already been achieved in space law could serve as the basis for renewed efforts to limit, through bilateral and multilateral agreements, the non-peaceful uses of outer space and further develop co-operation in outer space in a spirit of conciliation.

46. Mr. SOUMANO (Mali) said that the United Nations had accorded particular attention to international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space in view of the rapid progress of science and technology in that field. The initial objective, to understand the origins and evolution of the universe, had produced spectacular discoveries which permitted an infinite number of uses of outer space, but it would be necessary to control and channel those uses for the well-being of mankind.

47. It was unfortunate that international relations were currently characterized by various situations of conflict and the settlement of differences by force rather than by dialogue. The result was that international peace and security were permanently under threat. It was therefore natural that concern should be expressed with regard to an extension of the arms race into outer space. The super-Powers were making massive efforts to investigate new defence technologies, while other Powers competed to obtain nuclear arms, ignoring the fact that nuclear weapons rendered them liable to annihilation. His delegation reiterated its unswerving support for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Although his country did not carry out any space activities, it maintained relations with several countries in that field. As a result of international co-operation, certain developing countries had succeeded in launching geostationary satellites into orbit and had obtained useful information through remote sensing of the Earth by satellites. His country called upon the international community to persist in such humanitarian activities, hoped that more research would be directed towards the forecasting of natural disasters and strongly supported any initiative which might curb or put an end to the militarization of outer space.

(Mr. Suomano, Mali)

48. Although the spirit of its meetings had improved, COPUOS had not yet reached a specific agreement on the exact role which it should play, and it was therefore important that practical arrangements should be made to remedy that situation as soon as possible. His delegation supported the proposal that a working group should be established to examine the organization and working methods of the Committee.

49. His delegation supported the idea of a prohibition of arms in outer space and of a moratorium on space and nuclear weapons. Although not competent to carry out negotiations on the limitation of weapons in the manner of the Conference on Disarmament, COPUOS could contribute to the achievement of that objective on the scientific, and particularly on the legal level. His delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts made by certain countries and organizations to ensure the success of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

50. With regard to legal matters, his delegation recognized the value and importance of remote sensing by satellite, but questioned whether developing countries would have an equal right to information obtained thereby or a priority right to strategic information concerning their particular territories. Norms of international law should be formulated to protect the legitimate rights and interests of sensed States. In view of the possessive behaviour of the industrialized and technologically advanced countries, his delegation advocated the equitable utilization of space resources. The realm of space law must be defined and delimited by convention, with a view to resolving problems relating to the legal framework governing the orbit of geostationary satellites. The establishment of a boundary between Earth and outer space was a necessary pre-condition for any regulation in that field. His delegation also supported the proposal that the theme for the 1986 session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should be "Remote sensing for developing countries". It hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee would continue its detailed consideration of the legal implications of remote sensing, with the aim of formulating draft principles, undertake the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and continue its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space.

51. In conclusion, his delegation hoped that the recent summit meeting in Geneva would provide new impetus to COPUOS and that no effort would be spared to reinforce international peace and understanding.

52. Mr. DAMIAN (Romania) said that the interest of States in the activity of COPUOS and its Sub-Committees had increased as the role of outer space activities in the promotion of development efforts had grown. His delegation drew attention to the importance of the programmes of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and of the progress made by the Legal Sub-Committee in considering the legal implications of remote sensing of Earth by satellites. The activities of COPUOS and its two Sub-Committees demonstrated the useful contribution they could make to the implementation of recommendations made at UNISPACE 82:

53. One of the many important issues facing mankind was the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The transfer of military rivalry from earth to outer space

(Mr. Damian, Romania)

would have severe consequences for disarmament efforts and would further destabilize international security, thus increasing the danger of a nuclear catastrophe. It was the function of COPUOS to consider and to formulate legal norms for the co-operation of States in the peaceful uses of outer space, but it was impossible for it and for the Special Political Committee to remain passive towards the current militarization of outer space.

54. Space did not belong to any individual State and should be used in a spirit of equitable co-operation, which would be entirely compromised in the event of its militarization. His country believed that it was necessary to establish concrete measures to prevent such militarization and to ensure the effective use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in the interests of all mankind. It was of great significance that the recent summit meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States had confirmed the understanding of those countries on the need to find ways and means to prevent an arms race in outer space, and both the Special Political Committee and COPUOS could play a significant role in keeping space free of military competition.

55. His delegation was pleased with the successful efforts made the previous year to re-establish consensus on the mandate of COPUOS and believed that consensus was the only sound basis for its activity. However, it felt that the Committee's mandate should not be considered to be unchangeable but should take into account the real requirements of all States, particularly the developing countries, in the peaceful uses of outer space. Research undertaken in outer space demonstrated the significant potential it offered for acceleration of the economic development of all States, and the peaceful use of outer space could therefore provide a new basis for efforts to eliminate underdevelopment and to implement various economic and social programmes.

56. His delegation shared the opinion of the majority of States that the international community had the right and responsibility to participate in the formulation of norms and regulations to govern co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space. Such norms and regulations should ensure observance of the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the inalienable right of each people to free and independent development. The adoption of urgent measures in that connection should be seen not as an obstacle to technical progress but as a guarantee that scientific and technological discoveries would be used only in the best interests of all States.

57. Romania had submitted a proposal relating to the conclusion of an international treaty on outer space, the convening of a world conference and the establishment of a special United Nations body for the peaceful use of outer space. It had also supported the proposals submitted by the Soviet Union (A/SPC/40/3) concerning the peaceful uses of outer space, including the holding of an international conference and the establishment of an international body in that field. It supported all proposals designed to enhance the role of the United Nations in the development of co-operation among States in the peaceful use of outer space and was prepared to work together with other delegations to that end.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.