



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/42/20)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/518)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to letters pertaining to agenda item 76 from the representatives of Argentina and Chile, the Soviet Union, Chile and Romania (A/42/62, A/42/73, A/42/185 and A/42/562\* respectively).

2. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was the focal point for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and, as such, played a major role in enabling the General Assembly to ensure the orderly progress of outer space activities and spread the benefits from that advanced technology to all mankind. Having finalized five international conventions relating to outer space and adopted legal principles governing the remote sensing of the Earth from space, COPUOS was formulating further instruments which would help to develop international law in that field. It had also taken steps to extend the benefits of outer space activities to all member States by implementing the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82).

3. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), introducing the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/42/20) on behalf of the Chairman of that Committee said that in 1987 COPUOS was celebrating a double anniversary: 30 years earlier, in October 1957, the first artificial Earth satellite, Sputnik, had been launched; 10 years later, in 1967, the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, had entered into force.

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/64, COPUOS had continued its consideration, as a matter of priority, of the means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and had agreed that it could make important contributions to that end. It had emphasized the importance of strengthening international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space through multilateral, regional and bilateral co-operative activities and the promotion of specific projects to assist all countries, in particular developing countries. Divergent views regarding the proper role of the Committee in that area had prevented it from making significant progress. However, the debate had made it possible to clarify some of the positions held by Member States and it was hoped that that would assist the General Assembly in its assessment of the situation.

5. The consideration of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/383 and Corr.1) had essentially been concerned with the United Nations Programme on Space Applications co-ordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, remote

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

sensing of the Earth by satellites and the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space. With regard to the first topic, COPUOS had endorsed the programme of activities for 1988 and had expressed its appreciation to the Governments of Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, the USSR and the German Democratic Republic, the specialized agencies and other bodies, especially the European Space Agency (ESA), for their assistance in organizing seminars, workshops, training courses and meetings of experts in 1987. It had also thanked the Governments, specialized agencies and other bodies which had offered to host such activities in 1988. It also noted with appreciation the financial contributions made by the Governments of Nigeria and Pakistan. Lastly, it expressed its gratitude to the Governments of Austria, Brazil, the USSR and the German Democratic Republic and ESA for offering, through the United Nations, fellowships for in-depth training in 1986-1987 and for renewing their offers for 1987-1988. It also welcomed the co-operation between the United Nations and the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) in co-sponsoring a scientific workshop in 1988. In connection with the international space information service, it was gratified that an addendum had been issued to the trilingual publication entitled "Education, Training, Research and Fellowship Opportunities in Space Science and Technology and its Applications: A Directory" (A/AC.105/366).

6. At its 1987 session, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/64, had set up a Working Group of the Whole to evaluate the implementation of UNISPACE 82 recommendations. The Working Group had made a series of recommendations that had been approved by COPUOS which had also recommended its reconvening in 1988. The success of that Working Group's work proved that joint efforts could give impetus to implementation of the UNISPACE 82 recommendations.

7. On the other hand, very little headway had been made on other priority items. For instance, with regard to the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space, for the past two years neither the Sub-Committee nor COPUOS had managed to agree on the need to reconvene the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space and the General Assembly must therefore decide on the issue. In view of the scant progress made with respect to remote sensing, COPUOS had recommended that the item should be reformulated as "Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including, inter alia, applications for developing countries". With regard to the geostationary orbit, the delegations had reiterated the points of view expressed at earlier sessions and COPUOS had recommended that the item should be reformulated as "Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit. Examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications development, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries". Lastly, no significant developments had been recorded on space transportation systems and COPUOS had recommended that consideration of that topic should be continued at the Sub-Committee's next session.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

8. The Sub-Committee, always keen to enlarge the scientific content of its work, had decided that the theme set for special attention at its 1988 session should be "Micro-gravity experiments in space and their applications" and that COSPAR and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) should be invited to arrange a symposium on that theme. COPUOS had also endorsed the Sub-Committee's decision to continue with the other items on its agenda in 1988.

9. With respect to the report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/385), no significant progress had been achieved regarding the possibility of supplementing the norms of international law relevant to the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space, but certain Member States had clarified their positions. COPUOS had therefore recommended that that item should be retained on the Sub-Committee's agenda. As for the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, the discussion had not produced practical recommendations. COPUOS had therefore also recommended that the Sub-Committee should continue consideration of that topic at its next session. It would be remembered that, at the 1986 session, COPUOS had asked the Legal Sub-Committee to consider choosing a new item for its agenda. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to reach agreement on that matter. COPUOS had therefore recommended that the Sub-Committee should consider the matter further as a matter of priority in order to reach consensus in the near future, if possible during the current session of the General Assembly. A decision by the General Assembly thereon would enable the Legal Sub-Committee to proceed with substantive work.

10. In 1986, the activities of COPUOS had suffered from the severe budgetary restrictions imposed on it. Many States represented in that Committee had requested that steps should rapidly be taken to ensure in particular the financing of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly would take the necessary action thereon.

11. He hoped that the Special Political Committee would give the COPUOS clear guidance on the many difficult issues before it. In that connection, it was to be hoped that international co-operation in outer space would benefit from the encouraging trend in international relations, especially as a result of the recent progress in the bilateral arms-control talks. The relaxation in East-West tensions and the improvement in North-South relations could greatly facilitate the work of COPUOS. It was therefore necessary to overcome a degree of distrust in order to realize the potential benefits of co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

AGENDA ITEM 33: POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA  
(continued) (A/SPC/42/L.3 and Add.1-4)

12. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that it had set 2 November 1987 as the deadline for the submission of requests for hearings in connection with the item on apartheid. He suggested that the Committee should consider the requests contained in documents A/SPC/42/L.3 and Add.1-4 at its 16th meeting on 5 November 1987, in order to have time to inform the organizations and individuals whose request had been approved.

13. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic) deplored the delays in the issuing of documents in Arabic and pointed out, in particular, that to date the summary records in Arabic covered only the Committee's first three meetings. He asked the Chairman to bring that matter to the attention of heads of the conference services.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.