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at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (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 (A/40/621)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the members of the Committee to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/40/20 and Corr.1) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) (A/40/621 and Corr.1). A letter dated 25 January 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia (A/40/99), a letter dated 10 April 1985 from the representatives of Argentina, India, Italy and Nigeria (A/40/272) and a letter dated 13 November 1985 from the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union (A/SPC/40/3) had also been received.

2. Mr. VIGLIENZONE (United States of America) said that his delegation objected to the circulation of document A/SPC/40/3 for two reasons. First, the General Assembly, on 20 September 1985, had adopted unanimously the first report of the General Committee (A/40/250) which had also been adopted unanimously by that Committee and which had contained a recommendation urging States Members to exercise maximum restraint in requesting circulation of material as official documents of the Assembly. The Chairman of the Special Political Committee had made a similar appeal at the Committee's 2nd meeting. A brief review of document A/SPC/40/3 revealed that it was exactly the same as two previous documents, namely, the annex of document A/40/192, issued on 16 August 1985, and the entire document A/C.1/40/4, issued on 9 October 1985. Such triplication of document distribution was a waste of scarce United Nations resources and represented a wholesale disregard for the proper functioning of the General Assembly.

3. Second, when the Soviet delegation had requested that that material be circulated for the second time, its covering letter had made it clear that the General Committee had allocated the item, at the request of the Soviet delegation, to the First Committee. The circulation by the Soviet delegation of exactly the same document in the Special Political Committee as well as a duplication of effort that served no useful purpose and unnecessarily increased the budgetary outlay of the Organization.

4. There were legitimate means of calling the attention of delegates to documents of possible relevance. In that connection, his delegation requested delegations to take note of document A/40/476, dated 11 July 1985. If convenient, the Secretariat might wish to make copies of that document available to the Committee the following day.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was the focal point for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space within the framework of the United Nations and that, as such, it had played a major role in assisting the General Assembly to ensure orderly progress of outer space activities and the distribution of the benefits emanating therefrom to all mankind. COPUOS had successfully finalized five basic international conventions relating to outer space and had directed the Secretariat to transfer outer space technology to developing countries; it was currently in the process of formulating additional international instruments which would further enhance the reach of international law and, at the same time, would extend the benefits of outer space activities to all Member States through the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

6. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria), speaking as the Chairman of COPUOS, introduced the report of COPUOS (A/40/20 and Corr.1) and expressed satisfaction that the Committee had returned to its traditional working methods during its recent session and, in particular, had re-established the principle of consensus.

7. The work of COPUOS had covered three major areas, namely: ways and means for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes; the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the work of its twenty-second session, including the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 (A/AC.105/351); and the report of the Legal Sub-Committee on the work of its twenty-fourth session (A/AC.105/352). COPUOS had also decided to grant permanent observer status to the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Organization of Space Communications (INTELSPUTNIK).

8. During the consideration of the agenda item on ways and means for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, it had become evident that the basic differences of opinion which had in the past determined the climate of the Committee's deliberations on the issue remained unchanged. Nevertheless some new proposals had been made and various positions clarified, and it was therefore his hope that the discussion in the Special Political Committee would help to identify possible areas where the attention of COPUOS could most fruitfully be focused.

9. In its consideration of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, COPUOS had given priority to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and co-ordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, remote sensing of the Earth by satellites and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Committee had endorsed the programme of activities for 1986 of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. A major achievement had been the finalization of the three priority studies that had been carried out as requested by the General Assembly. Concerning the studies to be undertaken by specialized agencies and other international organizations, the Committee had noted with satisfaction that both the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) had carried out studies as part of their contribution to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

10. It had become amply clear that, considering the modest scale of voluntary contributions and their inherent unpredictability and uncertainty, there could be

(Mr. Jankowitsch, Austria)

only a limited increase in the scope and improvement of some of the elements of the Programme on Space Applications. He hoped that the General Assembly would feel able to offer some guidance on that crucial aspect of the follow-up to UNISPACE 82.

11. Little progress had been made on other priority items on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, namely, remote sensing of the Earth by satellite and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Committee's discussions relating to the physical and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit had not revealed any appreciable movement from established views, nor had the discussion of space transportation systems yielded any positive developments. COPUOS nevertheless recommended that those items be retained on the agenda of the Sub-Committee.

12. Outside the scope of the formal agenda, the 1985 session of the Sub-Committee had witnessed a resurgence of interest in supplementing the scientific content of its work by inviting presentations from Member States and international organizations particularly active in space activities. The Sub-Committee had agreed that a theme should be fixed for special attention at each of its future sessions and that COSPAR and IAF should be invited to co-operate in organizing discussions around those themes. COPUOS endorsed the Sub-Committee's recommendations.

13. The Legal Sub-Committee had continued to give priority consideration to the legal implications of remote sensing of the Earth from space and had succeeded in elaborating a set of draft principles that might provide a basis for agreement by consensus in the near future. COPUOS recommended that the item be retained on the agenda of the Sub-Committee at its next session.

14. On the issue of the possibility of supplementing the norms of international law relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the Legal Sub-Committee had been successful in working out formulations regarding two important themes, namely: notification prior to re-entry of a space object with nuclear power sources on board and assistance to States. Those formulations could provide a basis for an agreement by consensus in the near future. COPUOS endorsed the Sub-Committee's recommendation that the agenda item be reformulated to read "The elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space".

15. The discussions of the Legal Sub-Committee relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit had not produced concrete recommendations. It had been agreed that the item should be retained on the Legal Sub-Committee's agenda.

16. Mr. WIKSTROM (Sweden) said that an important milestone in the Swedish space programme would be the launching, in January 1986, of its first satellite, the VIKING, which would carry out measurements of the magnetosphere, in particular, the aurora borealis. Sweden would also participate with France in the SPOT remote sensing satellite and would co-operate with Norway and Finland in the Tele-X communication satellite project, which would provide direct television broadcasting in the three countries.

(Mr. Wikstrom, Sweden)

17. The United Nations and COPUOS had a special role to promote international co-operation and to facilitate participation in the benefits from space science and technology by all countries, regardless of their state of development. In that connection his delegation welcomed the return to the consensus tradition on the item relating to international co-operation in outer space; it was important that that tradition be upheld in the future.

18. Sweden continued to be deeply concerned about the prospect of the extension of the arms race into outer space. Most satellites launched hitherto had had military purposes but outer space had remained free from armed conflicts. With the development of specific weapons systems intended for use in outer space, that situation might well be changing. The introduction of space weapons could lead to a slowing down in the development of peaceful space activities. The question of an arms race in outer space must however be considered in the general context of disarmament, and his delegation hoped therefore that the Conference on Disarmament would be able to initiate negotiations with a view to reaching an agreement which would prevent an arms race in outer space.

19. Progress on the issue of space weapons during the negotiations currently taking place in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union would greatly assist the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Only through multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament could the concerns of the entire international community be met in full.

20. His delegation was convinced that renewed efforts to strengthen and develop co-operation between States in the field of outer space could be an important contribution to a reduction of international tensions and to a safer world. In that context, consideration should be given to the issue as to whether the 1975 Registration Convention, which was to be reviewed by the General Assembly in 1986, needed to be amended in order to improve trust between nations.

21. Although the Legal Sub-Committee had made great progress in its work on the legal implications of remote sensing of the Earth from space, it was regrettable that final agreement had not been reached on the draft principles at the last session of COPUOS. He therefore hoped that the Sub-Committee would complete its work on the draft principles in 1986. He noted with satisfaction that it had been agreed that the task of the Legal Sub-Committee was to elaborate draft principles for the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Legal Sub-Committee had produced an additional text on the subject of notification prior to re-entry of a spacecraft with a nuclear power source on board and a new text on assistance to States. His delegation expressed regret that some States had opposed the adoption of those texts in COPUOS. It was hoped that in 1986 the Legal Sub-Committee would be able to elaborate and agree on principles concerning the protection of populations and the environment. Nuclear power sources in outer space must be subject to at least the same kind of regulations governing the use of nuclear power sources on Earth.

22. The work done by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee was very valuable both as a basis for the elaboration of safety regulations and in order to assist countries to protect their citizens and the environment in case of an accident

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(Mr. Wikstrom, Sweden)

involving a nuclear power source. Although many constructive proposals had been made in the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, no agreement had been reached on them. If all delegations adopted a co-operative approach, it would be possible to make further progress speedily. It was regrettable that some States had opposed a reconvening of the Working Group in spite of the humanitarian nature of its task.

23. Although many useful results had been achieved in the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, much more could be done to enable developing countries to benefit from space science and technology. He urged those Member States which had not already done so to contribute to the Programme so that the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 could be implemented. Since the implementation of those recommendations had been rather slow, his delegation supported the proposal that a group of experts should be set up to elaborate options for the implementation of the UNISPACE 82 recommendations. Sweden was prepared to consider ideas for strengthening the role of the Special Political Committee and the United Nations in the field of outer space. He hoped that agreement could be reached on how to pursue such proposals.

24. One of the studies carried out as a follow-up to UNISPACE 82 had drawn attention to the problem of debris in the geostationary orbit. The problem of debris in outer space in general might have an impact on future manned space stations. Accordingly, his delegation felt that that question should be considered by both of the Sub-Committees. Lastly, he stressed the need for a spirit of reconciliation and co-operation in order to enable COPUOS to carry out its work effectively.

25. Mr. KOLOSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation was somewhat surprised at the statement made by the representative of the United States concerning the request by the Soviet Union to have the proposals contained in document A/SPC/40/3 circulated as an official document of the Special Political Committee. Paragraph 27 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/40/21) referred to a proposal made to request all States, in particular those with a greater space capability, to inform the Secretary-General about those space activities that could be the object of greater international co-operation for the peaceful uses of outer space. The request to have the text of the Soviet proposals circulated as an official document was a direct response to that proposal. Furthermore, document A/SPC/40/3 did not reproduce the complete text of the document discussed in the General Committee (A/40/192). Since there had been a change in the penultimate paragraph of document A/SPC/40/3, it could not be said that the text was an exact copy of the document circulated in the First Committee (A/C.1/40/4).

26. Moreover, the Soviet proposals contained in document A/SPC/40/3 were clearly in accordance with the agenda item of COPUOS on ways and means for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Lastly, he pointed out that the expenditures on paper would be more than justified if the proposals in question helped to channel the resources of States toward the peaceful use of outer space, which was of vital importance for all mankind.

27. Mr. VIGLIENZONE (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the change referred to by the Soviet representative in the penultimate paragraph of document A/SPC/40/3 involved the substitution of one word for another, which was basically an editorial change. Accordingly, his delegation maintained its position concerning the redundancy of the document in question.

AGENDA ITEM 78: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued) (A/40/21)
- (b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/40/617 and 841)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued) (A/40/667)

28. Mr. RADENKOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) stressed the importance of the role of information and communication in the development of countries on the basis of their equal sovereignty. The new world information and communication order must be based on the need for complete, objective and truthful information. The United Nations and the specialized agencies should promote efforts to reach common solutions on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities. The non-aligned countries and the developing countries had always sought to transform the United Nations into a true forum for negotiation and arrival at agreement.

29. With regard to questions relating to information, greater political will and imagination were required. He stressed the need for a multiplicity of sources of information and public participation in their management in order to ensure the right to development and promote international co-operation. In that connection, he pointed out that in July 1985 the Government of Yugoslavia had adopted a law on the basic principles governing the public information system. The law was designed to guarantee the constitutional right of citizens to free access to information and prevent the establishment of monopolies in the field of information and communications.

30. For the non-aligned countries and the other developing countries, the development of information and communication was directly linked to development problems and, thus, the maintenance of peace. The developing countries had made considerable efforts to strengthen co-operation in the field of information and communication. The Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies had made it possible to ensure a more extensive and democratic exchange of information. Co-operation between the Pool and the Department of Public Information (DPI) was extremely useful. In that connection, it was hoped that the decision to disseminate the dispatches of the Pool at the United Nations Office at Geneva would be speedily implemented. His delegation expressed satisfaction at the Department's programme for training journalists and broadcasters from developing countries and hoped that it would be continued and expanded.

31. The Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies had recently implemented a project called ECO-POOL, which transmitted information from news agencies in developing countries on economic co-operation to Governments, economic and financial institutions and non-aligned countries. It was envisaged that ECO-POOL would be

(Mr. Radenković, Yugoslavia)

able to disseminate information on economic matters and development questions in 80 non-aligned and developing countries in order to promote their mutual economic co-operation and provide useful information to developed countries interested in furthering economic co-operation with developing countries.

32. At a number of recent meetings, the non-aligned countries had defined the ways to overcome the current imbalance in the international flow of information. Agreement had been reached on activities aimed at promoting co-operation between the radio, television and other information agencies of non-aligned countries and continuing co-operation between institutes of journalism and other scientific and cultural institutions.

33. The non-aligned countries firmly supported the efforts of UNESCO to fulfil the aspirations of developing countries, which included the establishment of a new world information and communication order. The attempt to call in question the work of UNESCO and reject the system of multilateral co-operation was tantamount to casting doubt on the United Nations system itself.

34. The Committee on Information should assist UNESCO in its efforts to establish the new world information and communication order. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) was particularly important for the technical and scientific development of developing countries as equal partners in the international information system. The organization of the DPI/UNESCO round table on a new world information and communication order demonstrated that the Committee on Information and the Department could help to enhance co-operation between UNESCO and the Organization. He hoped that the round table would be held as soon as possible in 1985.

35. His delegation noted with satisfaction the recommendations put forward by the Committee on Information and expressed the hope that they would be adopted by the General Assembly and implemented as speedily as possible. Yugoslavia attached particular importance to activities aimed at the establishment of a new world information and communication order and the activities of UNESCO. Co-operation between the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and DPI was very important because it represented a concrete step towards a more equitable and better balanced dissemination of information in the world. He hoped that that co-operation would continue in the future and would lead to the establishment of a new world information and communication order.

36. Development Forum and the World Newspaper Supplement provided particularly useful information on the problems of developing countries, and steps should be taken to ensure their continued publication. His delegation expressed its support for the United Nations information centres and stressed the need to make better use of the resources of DPI, define the Department's priorities and provide it with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out its activities.

37. Mr. EKE (Benin) said that information and communication were currently marked by monopolization and unequal exchange. While most developing countries possessed the bare minimum in the information sector, the developed countries of the northern hemisphere showed ever-greater sophistication in their means of communication. It

(Mr. Eke, Benin)

was not unnatural, therefore, that the non-aligned countries and most developing countries should call for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order.

38. It was unfortunate that the developed countries turned a deaf ear to the calls for such an order, which implied respect for the sovereignty and independence of developing countries, and also for the cultural identity of all peoples. News concerning developing countries, as distributed by the Western media, was often negative and biased. It was therefore reassuring to note that the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies had provided a new boost to co-operation aimed at the neutralization of press campaigns against the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and against liberation movements.

39. With reference to the report of the Committee on Information, his delegation was disappointed that the draft recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/L.29 submitted by the Group of 77 had not been adopted by consensus. It continued to believe that the definition advanced by the Group of 77 for the new world information and communication order remained the most objective one, since it took into account the points of view and interests of all parties. It appealed to all delegations to approve the recommendations proposed by the Group of 77 concerning the question of Palestine, the independence of Namibia and the apartheid policy of the South African régime.

40. With regard to the establishment of a United Nations information centre at Cotonou, his delegation hoped that negotiations between DPI and the Government of Benin would result in the opening of that centre at an early date.

41. Mr. ADAN (Somalia) said that the call for the establishment of a new world information and communication order was in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Common ground could be found with regard to a number of basic objectives, such as strengthening the principle of freedom of information through the elimination of existing imbalances, diversifying sources of information and enhancing the communication capabilities of developing countries. The populations of developing countries must be enabled to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural affairs at the national and international level. In that connection, his delegation commended those countries which provided bilateral and multilateral assistance for the strengthening of the communications infrastructures of developing countries.

42. UNESCO had played a central role in the efforts to establish a new world information and communication order and should continue its effective work to achieve the objectives of the United Nations in the field of information. It was particularly gratifying to note the efforts of IPDC to strengthen the technical and human resources of developing countries. The co-operation between UNESCO and DPI had been fruitful and should continue to contribute to the promotion of a new world order in the field of information. Their joint sponsorship of round tables was particularly useful and it was hoped that the Department of Public Information/UNESCO round table on a new world information and communication order would be held soon.

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(Mr. Adan, Somalia)

43. The expansion of co-operation between DPI and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies was a welcome example of the diversification of sources of information. Similar measures should be taken with regard to a regional news source which did not ordinarily receive international attention. In view of the hostility or indifference of certain sectors of the mass media to the United Nations, DPI and Member States had the responsibility of disseminating information on the activities of the Organization in a balanced and impartial manner. Although the tragic consequences of the African crisis had been widely publicized, there was a continuing need to mobilize further international support for long-term assistance. In that regard, the efforts of the Joint United Nations Information Committee to promote inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination had been of great value.

44. He stressed the continuing need to disseminate information on disarmament, peace-keeping, the struggle against apartheid and all forms of racial discrimination, the efforts to bring about the independence of Namibia and protect the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the establishment of a new international economic order and the work of the United Nations system in social and economic development. DPI carried out its important work as effectively as possible in view of its budgetary constraints. In that connection, he emphasized that the Department should be provided with resources commensurate with its responsibilities. His delegation welcomed the Department's efforts to establish a better geographical balance with regard to staff appointments and expressed the hope that those efforts would continue within the normal guidelines of the United Nations. The Secretary-General should continue to develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the activities of DPI, particularly in the priority areas determined by the General Assembly.

45. Somalia had always supported the view that the United Nations should take full advantage of available sophisticated communications technology. Accordingly, it welcomed the experimental short-wave radio broadcasts to African countries as a possible first step toward the establishment of a world-wide United Nations short-wave network. He reiterated his Government's view that the United Nations should not exclude the possibility of acquiring a communications satellite. He stressed that with good will and a spirit of co-operation it would be possible to reach a consensus on questions relating to information and thus achieve common goals in that field.

46. It was important that DPI should publicize the wide-ranging activities of the United Nations in a balanced and impartial manner. The Department should function as the focal point of the Secretariat for the formulation and implementation of information activities of the United Nations.

47. Mr. DEEN (Malaysia) said that it was impossible to overstate the fundamental importance of information, particularly of its role as a vehicle for change and development. It could be used as a tool for constructive relations between nations, or in a destructive fashion, as a weapon of propaganda. Advances in technology had made its role even more crucial. The attention focused by the networks of the developed countries on the drought in Africa had demonstrated the role of the media in shaping international public opinion and also the dependence of the developing world on those networks. There was a clear imbalance between the developed and the developing countries in the control of the media, and it was in

(Mr. Deen, Malaysia)

order to maintain that imbalance that the media of the developed countries described the call for a new world information and communication order as an attempt to curb the freedom of the press.

48. The Western press had begun its campaign against UNESCO in 1978, when that body had called for the establishment of the new order. The very strength of the campaign conducted against it, which included malicious distortion of facts about the organization, demonstrated the need for the establishment of such an order. It was true that principles such as freedom of the press were fundamental. However, in view of the current imbalances which promoted such selective distortions, those principles themselves appeared to be threatened. Developing countries should also be allowed to interpret events, as a means both to encourage change and development and to preserve their indigenous cultures.

49. Ironically, the emergence of new technology helped to sustain imbalances, since the developing world exercised no control over many of the recent innovations. Nevertheless, the developed countries had not been totally insensitive to the needs of developing States, and Malaysia itself had benefited from several projects made possible by contributions from developed countries within the context of IPDC. Malaysia had always believed that it was not the responsibility of the developed countries alone to bridge the information gap, and had sought to increase its own communication facilities through co-operation with other developing countries, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and international organizations. It had been much encouraged by the launching of Asiavision, a regional news exchange programme, in co-operation with Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, which had made it possible to portray regional events from a local angle rather than by means of transnational news agencies.

50. While regretting that it had not been possible to adopt the recommendations of the Committee on Information by consensus, his delegation wished to express its strong support for the 70 recommendations adopted by an overwhelming majority. It also appreciated the efforts made by UNESCO, as detailed in document A/40/667, and would continue to give its full support to that organization. Finally, he noted with appreciation the co-operation of DPI with both UNESCO and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies.

51. Mr. NAZARI-TAJABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that recent technological advances in the field of information had broadened the gap between developed and developing countries and caused a greater monopolization of communication systems by transnational corporations. Many delegations had expressed concern at the control of information by Governments, and had asserted that truth should be pursued by several voices rather than by one. However, Western media coverage of the struggle by the black majority population of South Africa against the apartheid régime had consistently failed to bring out the truth of the tragedy in that country, as a result of monopolization of the media by the transnational corporations. Third world countries had therefore chosen UNESCO as the best means to formulate a new world information and communication order. Reliable news should be obtained through independent sources, and the role of monopolies in dominating communication systems reduced.

(Mr. Nazari-Tajabadi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

52. With regard to item 15 on the agenda of the substantive session of the Committee on Information, his delegation asked whether the Department of Public Information had been impartial in its coverage of violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and whether it had ever initiated any other fact-finding missions to investigate violations of other international codes, including the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925. DPI should serve to promote the principles of the United Nations Charter and to ensure peace and security by bringing facts to the attention of international public opinion.

53. Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) said that the mass information media should reflect the efforts of developing countries to bring about their economic, social and cultural development with the support of the international community. That would promote a greater public awareness of the important work carried out by the United Nations, particularly with regard to development. In its six years of existence, the Committee on Information had dealt with vital questions concerning the information activities of the United Nations and the general question of the responsibility of the information media with regard to the objectives of development and the strengthening of international peace and understanding. Decisions taken by the Committee on Information and the Special Political Committee relating to information should therefore reflect genuine understanding between peoples based on common agreement.

54. The role of the information media in developing countries in promoting economic and social activities was important. In those countries, journalists were not mere spectators, but were actively engaged in organizing and promoting campaigns to improve literacy, sanitation, housing, and agricultural productivity. In the democratic developing countries, the press promoted respect for human rights and freedom of information. That was the case in Ecuador, where freedom of the press as well as the freedom of the other information media were traditionally respected. In his country there was no prior censorship, and free access to sources of information was fully guaranteed.

55. The Special Political Committee should orient its work on information questions along the broad lines of the relationship between information and the responsibilities of development and should stress the importance of disarmament, peace and collective security in achieving development. The report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/40/667) showed that concrete progress had been made in a number of areas, particularly the training of journalists and broadcasters from developing countries.

56. The Committee on Information and the Special Political Committee should devote greater attention to questions relating to information as such. There were other forums in the United Nations system for exhaustive discussions on questions of a political nature. In that connection, he stressed the need to seek areas of common agreement in the field of information. His delegation was ready to co-operate to that end in the Special Political Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.