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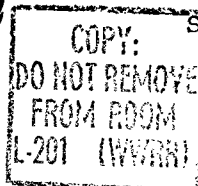
FORTIETH SESSION

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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
44th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 26 November 1985
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KORHONEN (Finland)

CONTENTS

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.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/40/20 and Corr.1; A/40/621)

1. Mrs. CARRASCO (Bolivia) said that all peoples were interested in fostering the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, as well as in preventing the arms race from spreading to outer space. To that end, multilateral co-operation must be encouraged so that the major benefits of space technology could be used to further the economic and social progress of all countries, especially the developing countries. In its report, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had recognized the need to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes.
2. Although the world situation did not offer hopes for a solution or agreement among the major space Powers, she hoped that the international community would become aware of the grave problem which would result from the militarization of outer space. All States must fulfil their obligation to respect the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security.
3. With regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, she drew attention to the countries which co-operated by sharing their experience in space technology with other developing countries. The Legal Sub-Committee should continue its consideration of the legal implications of remote sensing of the Earth from space, with the aim of formulating draft principles which would take into account the need to protect States' sovereignty over data and information regarding their territory which might be obtained by remote sensing.
4. Her delegation shared the views and hopes expressed in the Committee that the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, as well as its programme of action, whose aim was to ensure that all States reaped benefits from space applications, should be fully implemented. She also referred to the resolution adopted at the Third Meeting of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Public Works of the Countries Signatories of the Cartagena Agreement (A/40/99, annex) in which, inter alia, it was decided to make joint proposals for the establishment of advance planning for the orbit and spectrum, rejecting the principle of "first come, first served", and for the geostationary orbit and radio-frequency spectrum in bands of special interest to the countries signatories of the Cartagena Agreement.
5. Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand) expressed his delegation's appreciation both to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee for their well-prepared and constructive report. His delegation was also satisfied with the work of the Legal Sub-Committee in formulating regulations on remote-sensing satellites. Those satellites, which should be used for the social and economic development of all countries, should not be used to violate States' sovereignty.

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

Regulations and a scientific and legal basis for the use of the geostationary orbit should be established in a manner which would serve the interests of all mankind. Thailand attached great importance to its co-operation with the United Nations in the peaceful uses of outer space. There should be an intensive effort to develop space technology with a view to ensuring that all States shared in its benefits. His delegation was gravely concerned about the danger of the extension and intensification by the super-Powers of the arms race in outer space: they should heed the call of the peoples of the world and adopt immediate measures to halt the arms race in outer space and to prevent its militarization. Scientific and technical research in outer space must be conducted only for peaceful purposes.

7. His delegation was pleased at the positive atmosphere which had prevailed during the recent summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union, the two major space Powers, which held out some hope for future negotiations on space weapons. Thailand appealed to all States to co-ordinate their outer space activities within the United Nations system and to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

8. Mr. NAQVI (Pakistan) said that the world was conscious of the phenomenal growth of knowledge and technology relating to outer space which had taken place in recent years. The space age, which had dawned more than 28 years before, had become a fundamental reality of modern life. The consideration of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space at the current session had coincided with the passage of Halley's comet near the Earth's atmosphere.

9. Developments in space technology had continued at a remarkable pace in 1985. Some noteworthy examples were the United States Space Shuttle Programme, the Salyut-7 orbital station system of the USSR, China's CZ-3 launching vehicle and India and Japan's plans to develop heavy satellite-launching vehicles. In the aerospace field, satellite-based communications, remote sensing and the space industry were examples of areas of application which held vast potential for benefiting the world.

10. Pakistan had prepared a detailed long-term plan of space science and technology, whose principal objective was to promote the peaceful application of new technology for the social and economic betterment of society. Pakistan's space programme included: the establishment of ground stations to receive scientific and meteorological data from various types of satellites; the tracking of satellites; the launching of satellites as part of the national communication satellite system (PAKSAT); and the development of lightweight scientific satellites for remote sensing and communication. To achieve those objectives, his Government would establish a ground receiving station in Islamabad capable of receiving data from the United States LANDSAT series of satellites and the planned French support satellites. The Pakistan Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission (SUPARCO) had designed and manufactured terminals for receiving television signals from direct broadcasting satellites. The ultimate objective of the PAKSAT system and the television equipment was to extend the satellite television and telecommunication services to rural areas in Pakistan, where 70 per cent of the population lived. SUPARCO had made considerable progress in using satellite

(Mr. Naqvi, Pakistan)

remote-sensing data to conduct studies on flooding and salinity, silting in dams, desertification, reforestation and land use.

11. The international community had a threefold task in the matter of outer space: maintaining outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes, ensuring the equitable sharing of the benefits of space technology by all countries, irrespective of their economic and scientific development, and formulating a new body of law regulating the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space. COPUOS, whose work was overseen by the Special Political Committee, had served as the focal point for those collective efforts since its creation in 1959.

12. One of the major issues confronting the Committee was that of preventing the militarization of outer space. Pakistan strongly believed that outer space belonged to all mankind and should be maintained exclusively for peaceful purposes. It was deeply concerned at the far-reaching, dangerous consequences of the militarization of outer space. The development of a new generation of weapons would increase the prevailing disparities in military capability between the super-Powers and their allies, on the one hand, and the non-aligned and neutral States, on the other, thereby increasing the strategic vulnerability of the latter. For those reasons, his delegation was disappointed that some countries continued to dispute the competence of COPUOS to discuss the vital issue of the demilitarization of outer space. It did not agree with the view that the Conference on Disarmament had exclusive jurisdiction in that regard; the functions of COPUOS and the Conference should be mutually supportive and they should jointly focus their attention on that issue in view of its overriding importance and far-reaching consequences.

13. His delegation attached great importance to the establishment of an international régime for the dissemination of satellite remote-sensing data, which was essential for the effective development of the applications of remote-sensing technology. Pakistan had actively participated in the consideration of the draft principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space by COPUOS during the past summer. Furthermore, it reviewed the geostationary orbit as a limited resource which should be used for the benefit of mankind. The Legal Sub-Committee should continue its consideration of that subject in order to arrive at a solution which guaranteed the availability of that unique resource to all nations, in particular the developing countries. While Pakistan was satisfied with the expansion of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, it was concerned that the progress achieved so far in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had not been entirely satisfactory, mainly because of inadequate funding. In spite of its limited resources, Pakistan had made modest cash contributions every year to demonstrate the importance which it attributed to the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

14. Mr. RODRIGUEZ MEDINA (Colombia) said that co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space was unimaginable without the goodwill of all parties, particularly the technological Powers. Nevertheless, there was still not sufficient political will to spur on the work of COPUOS. Of the 21 recommendations of UNISPACE 82, only 3 had been implemented; the rest had not, for want of funds or

(Mr. Rodriguez Medina, Colombia)

political will. Since tacit agreement had been reached at the Vienna Conference on co-operation and the transfer of technology between the great Powers and the developing countries, and since the international community had still not expressed its desire to co-operate in practice, the main function of COPUOS was to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

15. His delegation supported the draft principles submitted by Austria and hoped that they would be adopted by consensus although they were not very ambitious in terms of co-operation. The underlying reason for that lack of ambition was the financial crisis of the United Nations. Co-operation was impossible without resources, and the resources at the disposal of the United Nations and the developing world were very scarce. Colombia was in favour of devising an instrument to ensure co-operation and the flow of resources to developing countries. Activities in the field of telecommunications should be carried out on a regional basis. The Andean Group was working on "Project Condor" which would be linked up with the work already done by the Asian countries and subsequently by Brazil, Mexico and the Arab world. To that end, it had requested and obtained support from the United Nations. It was to be hoped that the World Bank and regional banks would give priority to such projects.

16. Although it was alarming that a lack of impetus had prevented the Legal Sub-Committee from carrying out its difficult work, the Conference of the International Telecommunication Union had revitalized the Sub-Committee by assigning to it the legal regulation of the geostationary orbit. While the geostationary orbit was the most valuable resource ever discovered in space exploration, it had been systematically plundered, and a legal régime responding to the needs, rights and aspirations of the developing and equatorial countries should be set up. The technological gap in the exploration of the geostationary orbit demonstrated the lack of international co-operation, a situation which, if it were to become critical, would augur a sombre future. Although it would be possible to find solutions, in order to do so, COPUOS should begin as soon as possible to consider the legal aspects of co-operation in outer space.

17. He reiterated the concern which his country had always expressed with regard to the militarization and private use of outer space. The problem of the private use of outer space might be even more serious than that of its militarization. The commercialization of outer space was already a fact, and until there were adequate regulations, it would not be easy to establish the principle of responsibility. Suggestions and recommendations must be made so that outer space could be explored in peace and anarchy avoided.

18. Mr. KOLOSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the policy of assigning equal blame to all parties to a dispute was wrong and that the fair approach was to hold the party which had caused the situation responsible. He reiterated his delegation's position that attempts to attribute the same responsibility to all efforts to place weapons in outer space would not help to solve the problem in the way desired by the overwhelming majority of the international community.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.