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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SCHAFFER (Germany)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Schafer (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/46/20 and A/46/389)

1. Mr. KOUPRIYAN (Ukraine) said that radical changes had taken place in international relations which had contributed to encouraging confidence on the basis of international law. The conquest of space would be achieved only through the joint efforts of the international community backed by a world centre, like the United Nations, capable of affecting events.
2. During the current year, the international community had celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of mankind's first space flight, and in 1992 it would celebrate International Space Year. He hoped that those events would contribute to a further qualitative improvement in the peaceful uses of outer space.
3. His country had considerable technical and scientific capabilities, and great experience in rocket technology. Moreover, it was preparing apparatus and instruments for the construction of large structures in outer space. In recent years it had made great progress in remote sensing of Earth and the oceans from space. That experience would enable it to apply the concept of a common geo-co-informational system, the purpose of which was the preservation and monitoring of the environment. His country's experts were also taking an active part in the monitoring of seismic activities and earthquake forecasting as well as in work related to space biology. It was prepared to cooperate with other countries and to share the results of its research.
4. His country considered the remote sensing of Earth a highly important area of cooperation and therefore favoured an international project for the peaceful use of the results of world remote sensing of Earth. That project had ecological and meteorological applications.
5. In connection with International Space Year, during the current year a conference on space museums had been held in Zhitomir and a new space exposition had been inaugurated. In addition, the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had proposed that a scientific seminar for foreign experts, particularly from developing countries, should be held on new methods of remote sensing. The Space Research Committee of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had also accepted requests for fellowships and study trips for experts from the developing countries interested in space studies.
6. In spite of the progress achieved, there was a threat of the militarization of outer space. It must be prevented at all costs. For that reason, his country favoured the establishment of an International Space Directorate to monitor activities in space.

(Mr. Koupriyan, Ukraine)

7. It also supported the establishment of contacts between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament, as the exploration of outer space had both military and non-military implications.

8. His country attached great importance to the consolidation of legal norms on space, which would reduce the possibility of tension and conflicts. It was therefore concerned at the lack of progress in the preparation of principles on nuclear energy sources in outer space, a problem which could be solved by the good will of States. Among other questions which required constructive effort, mention should be made of the delimitation of outer space and a legal regime for the geostationary orbit in the interests of all countries.

9. Mr. NOREEN (Sweden), referring to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, said that it would be highly desirable for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to continue to provide expert services to the Committee and its two subcommittees, and felt that the Legal Subcommittee should make every effort to complete the draft principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space at its next session.

10. Remote sensing was of fundamental importance for monitoring the Earth's environment, in particular for studying and monitoring global change. Remote sensing played a central role in the activities proposed for the International Space Year in 1992. The International Space Year activities of the United Nations would essentially be executed through the Space Applications Programme, which to a large degree was dependent on voluntary contributions. As such a contribution, Sweden would in 1992 for the second time act as host to a United Nations training course on remote-sensing education for educators.

11. Space technology was an important instrument for protecting the Earth's environment, but if space itself was polluted its exploration would be jeopardized. For that reason, the General Assembly had recommended that more attention should be paid to the protection and preservation of the outer space environment. As the discussions in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had demonstrated, there was growing international concern over the issue of space debris, an issue which should be addressed through international cooperation.

12. Mr. FAWZY (Egypt) said that the progress made in space technology, with its double-edged nature entailing both military and civilian implications, highlighted the need to safeguard outer space against an arms race. That ambivalence underscored the relevance of the concerns of the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on Outer Space, whose ultimate objective was to maintain outer space for peaceful uses. It was therefore necessary to amend article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, which implicitly allowed for deployment of some weapons in outer space while prohibiting such deployment on the moon or other celestial bodies.

(Mr. Fawzy, Egypt)

13. It was the purpose of the Committee to promote international cooperation; accordingly, the presence of experts should be fully utilized not simply as a vehicle of information exchange but rather to contribute to international cooperation on outer space. Regarding the work of the Legal Subcommittee, his delegation hoped that agreement would soon be reached on the conclusion of a set of principles on the use of nuclear power sources and the role of IAEA in that regard. It also hoped for positive results from the discussions in that Subcommittee on the benefits of space technology. The exchange of information on that subject should help the countries with less space capabilities to develop their own capabilities.

14. His delegation considered it imperative to reach agreement on the delimitation of outer space. Regarding the geostationary orbit, emphasis should be maintained on ways and means of ensuring rational and equitable use and access to it through the establishment of a special legal regime.

15. Space debris was also a concern for his delegation, and it welcomed the increased emphasis given to the issue in the Committee. It felt, also, that a generic relationship existed between the work of the Conference on Disarmament and that of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as the issues they dealt with were intertwined; permanent contacts should therefore be established between the two bodies.

16. Mr. KHAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was important because it enabled all Member States, whatever their level of development, to benefit from the progress of science and technology in that field. It must therefore be pointed out that although the great progress made in the exploration of outer space had had beneficial consequences for the industrialized countries which had the relevant technological capacities, that had not happened in most of the developing countries. From that point of view, his delegation hoped that the developing countries would be given assistance, particularly with respect to remote sensing and its applications, by means of training activities and greater access to technology, information and space images.

17. His delegation was convinced that all countries should use outer space for peaceful purposes and cooperate in all the activities related to such use. That, together with the good will of all parties, would ensure that the interests of all nations were served. It would also help to avoid conflicts on outer space questions.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.