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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
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at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

later: Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile)

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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
(continued)

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

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/518 and Corr.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the Committee's fifth meeting he had drawn attention to document A/SPC/42/L.5 in which the Chairman of the Fifth Committee had asked him to transmit to him, no later than the first week of November, any views that the Special Political Committee might wish to express on programme planning and the preparation of the next medium-term plan. All such comments were to have been submitted in writing before 4 November. Since he had received no communications, he would inform the Chairman of the Fifth Committee that the Special Political Committee had no comments to make.

2. Mr. KAKOLECKI (Poland) observed that since the launching of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, 30 years earlier, space research and technology had advanced rapidly, broadening human knowledge and understanding of the universe and making a valuable contribution to the solution of many problems on Earth. From the outset of the space era, various United Nations resolutions had established the important principle of the exploration and use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. That fundamental rule had served as the basis for a whole series of resolutions and international treaties the objective of which was to prevent an arms race in space.

3. Poland fully endorsed all initiatives aimed at developing peaceful co-operation in outer space; it supported the proposal to establish a world space organization and the suggestion that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) should make concrete proposals on how to conduct a study on the needs of States with respect to the use of space technology within the framework of broad international co-operation.

4. While noting with satisfaction that COPUOS had once again recognized in its report (A/42/20, para. 17) the need to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes and had agreed that it could make important contributions to that end, his delegation regretted that its commitment had thus far remained a dead letter. His delegation hoped that, with the improved international climate, that Committee would in the future achieve more satisfactory results.

5. The twenty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had been both useful and interesting. The report of the Working Group of the Whole contained valuable ideas on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). The session had also provided his delegation with the opportunity

(Mr. Kakolecki, Poland)

to review the scientific and technical activities in Poland in fields such as space physics, geodesy, biology, medicine, satellite meteorology, remote sensing, telecommunication and materials processing in space. Its activities under the INTERCOSMOS programme demonstrated the benefits that countries with limited technological possibilities could derive from friendly international co-operation.

6. As to the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, the recent adoption of remote-sensing principles confirmed the fact that, when necessary, even the most difficult problems could be solved satisfactorily if States were ready to make compromises. The outstanding questions should be approached in the same way, particularly the definition and delimitation of outer space, an issue on which it was increasingly urgent to make progress in view of rapid developments in outer space science and technology that made for a steady decrease in the altitude and perigee of orbiting satellites and spacecraft. The formula whereby any object launched into outer space would be considered as being in outer space at all stages of its flight after launch at which its altitude above sea level was 110 kilometres or more constituted a constructive step towards a compromise solution.

7. With regard to the question of the geostationary orbit, it should be noted that after a long period of stalemate, some points of convergence among different proposals held out some hope of progress. Poland favoured new efforts to settle that question in compliance with the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, since the geostationary orbit was an integral part of outer space and could not be appropriated by any State.

8. His delegation, which was following with great interest the work on the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, believed that the essential requirement for achieving tangible results was to take due account of the two Conventions adopted on the question in 1986 under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

9. As to the choice of a new item for the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, he hoped that the members of the Special Political Committee would reach a decision by consensus. His delegation rejected any suggestions for limiting or shortening the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, which must receive all the resources it needed in order to discharge its important responsibilities.

10. Mr. OKELY (Australia) said that for nearly three decades the States Members of the United Nations had been working to develop outer space - humankind's last frontier - for peaceful purposes. The previous year had been one of consolidation and some progress. His delegation noted with particular satisfaction the resumption of the United States space programme. For Australia, which on 15 September had launched its third communications satellite (AUSSAT-III) aboard a European Ariane launcher, 1987 had been a significant year. With three satellites in orbit, it was at last able to provide modern and efficient communications facilities to the remotest parts of the Australian continent.

11. Australia placed great value on the deliberations of COPUOS and was pleased that during the three sessions in 1987 it had continued to adopt its decisions by

(Mr. Okely, Australia)

consensus. Another welcome trend was towards more technical and less polemical discussion in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

12. His delegation, like many others, was concerned to note that the operating budget for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications had been reduced to less than half of the original 1987 allocation. It was of the strong opinion that the priorities within the Outer Space Affairs Division should be reviewed and possibly rearranged in order to use the available funds to best effect.

13. Some progress had been made in the Legal Sub-Committee towards an agreement on a régime for the operation of nuclear power sources in space, but a number of technical issues remained unresolved, and it might be useful to examine them in a working group. His delegation was pleased that the Soviet Union would join a consensus on the re-establishment of such a working group.

14. The topic selected as a new item on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee must be capable of leading to the elaboration of legal principles. But the proposals made so far did not meet all the requisite conditions. It might be more useful for the Special Political Committee to direct its efforts to the items already on the agenda and to give serious consideration to reducing the length of the Legal Sub-Committee's session to two weeks and leaving the agenda as it currently stood. As the issue was contentious, it would be best to consider the question at the session of the Legal Sub-Committee in 1988.

15. If the Committee and its subsidiary bodies wanted their work to have any import, they must do everything in their power to adopt decisions by consensus. His delegation was pleased to note that at all sessions, States had steered clear of issues concerning the militarization of outer space, which belonged exclusively in the First Committee; all members of the Committee should work to oppose any attempt to reintroduce them, because that would trigger a crisis similar to that of 1983-1984.

16. Mr. FERM (Sweden) said that despite the progress made since the entry into force, in 1967, of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, there was still room for a further strengthening of the relevant legal régime. So far, outer space had remained free from armed conflict, but there was still a possibility that the arms race might spread into outer space, and the deployment of anti-satellite weapons and other weapons systems could create a dangerously unstable situation and jeopardize the peaceful use of outer space.

17. The question of an arms race in outer space must be considered in the general context of disarmament, and the Conference on Disarmament was the appropriate forum for negotiations on an agreement or agreements relating to such questions. The importance of bilateral negotiations on space weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union should not, however, be minimized. Multilateral and bilateral efforts should complement each other. Unfortunately, there had been very little progress in the talks between the super-Powers. He hoped that the improved

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

international climate would contribute to reaching an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in space.

18. As accidents involving spacecraft with nuclear power sources on board could affect any country, the international community must give priority to the establishment of safety regulations. In 1986, the Legal Sub-Committee had reached agreement on two principles, one concerning notification and the other assistance to States. Since then, no progress had been made. His delegation therefore proposed that both Sub-Committees should be given the assistance of a working group to facilitate its work.

19. The implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 must be accelerated. The Working Group of the Whole set up by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to evaluate the progress made in that area could contribute greatly to that end. Without financial support, it would not be possible to implement the recommendation to strengthen the United Nations Space Applications Programme. As a result of the financial crisis in the United Nations, the resource allocations for the Programme had been drastically reduced. He hoped that more countries would make contributions to the Programme.

20. Throughout its existence, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had made very positive contributions to developing outer space law, but if it was to be equally effective in the future, it must be prepared to consider improving its organization and working methods as needs and conditions changed.

21. COPUOS had agreed that the Legal Sub-Committee could take on new tasks. Consideration should be given, in the near future, to the field of "space environment", including "space debris", and the elaboration of recommendations to improve the implementation of the 1975 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. Registration procedures could be further improved. The international community would benefit from more timely and appropriate information on space objects and their missions. Increased openness on those activities, following the example of relations between the super-Powers in the military field, would enhance confidence between States.

22. Mr. WIRYONO (Indonesia) stressed the great importance that applications of space technology had for the economic, social and cultural progress of the developing countries. Numerous achievements testified to his Government's firm determination to utilize space science and technology to advance development. Indonesia had also promoted regional co-operation by launching its Palapa satellite communications system.

23. Over the years, the work of the Committee had demonstrated the importance of international co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space. The cost of space activities was such that developing countries were dependent on external assistance. Co-operation was particularly needed in training, research and adaptation of technology. Indonesia continued, to the best of its ability, to

(Mr. Wiryono, Indonesia)

share its experience with other developing countries. It also hosted meetings of experts and regional seminars organized by the United Nations.

24. Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 was crucial for the developing countries. His Government welcomed the work of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee which had led to concrete recommendations on expanding operational activities and increasing co-operation. His delegation regretted that the budget of the United Nations Space Applications Programme for the biennium 1986-1987 had been reduced to less than half and hoped that the advanced States, the United Nations specialized agencies and financial institutions would provide the Programme with adequate support, particularly to carry out activities related to training and higher education.

25. International co-operation was also of great importance in elaborating legal instruments governing activities in outer space, and his delegation therefore fully endorsed the proposal of the Group of 77 to include on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee consideration of legal aspects related to the access of States to the benefits derived from the exploration and utilization of outer space. Consideration of that item would complement the efforts of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and experience had shown simultaneous consideration of interrelated issues had contributed to the deliberations of the two Sub-Committees.

26. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the examination of the item on the geostationary orbit by the relevant Working Group had been facilitated by the comparative chart submitted by Indonesia, and expressed the hope that members of the Legal Sub-Committee would work in unison at the Sub-Committee's following session. However, it regretted that the Working Group responsible for considering the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space had been unable to reach an agreement. It believed that the working paper in that regard submitted by Canada was a good basis for considering that item.

27. Indonesia was gravely concerned about the possible extension of the arms race into outer space. It would be advisable to define the practical arrangements for collaboration between the Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, so that the latter could benefit from the Committee's vast experience in that field.

28. Mr. TANASIE (Romania) said that the international situation was far from reassuring. The arms race, in particular, had reached alarming proportions, and nuclear tests continued. Not only had conflicts not diminished, but they had worsened, posing an increasing threat to international peace and security, and endangering the entire planet. It was thus essential to renounce the theory that nuclear force was a guarantee of security, and to prevent the militarization of outer space at all costs. At the same time, it was necessary to define the legal and political framework for co-operation which would place space technology at the service of all States for their equitable economic and social development. It was unfortunate that the Committee had been unable to reach practical agreement in that area.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

29. Outer space was part of mankind's heritage. It was thus disturbing to note that it was increasingly being polluted with debris from spacecraft. Likewise, the question of satellites with nuclear power sources on board deserved to be considered more seriously, because of the risks posed by the launching of such objects. Romania and its President suggested that the General Assembly should appeal to all States concerned to limit the number of such spacecraft, to begin negotiations as soon as possible with a view to regulating the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and to draw up a rational system for the exploration and exploitation of outer space for the benefit of all mankind.

30. Outer space exploration had helped to broaden mankind's knowledge of the Earth and the universe, and had paved the way for great progress in medicine, biology, chemistry, electronics and agriculture. Only by institutionalizing international co-operation could all States benefit from the applications of space technology. His delegation supported the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Regarding the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, he believed that those questions should be the subject of a new international treaty on the peaceful uses of outer space, which would ensure that all countries, particularly developing ones, had access to space technology for the purpose of economic, cultural and social progress. The proposal, submitted by the Group of 77, to place that item on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee deserved careful consideration. The same attention should be given to the proposal concerning the legal status of a spacecraft crew and the possibility of establishing, under the auspices of the United Nations, a group of experts to prepare a report on States' needs in using space technology, based on a questionnaire drawn up by the Secretary-General.

31. His delegation appreciated the work done by the Committee and requested it to redouble its efforts in order to attain tangible results.

32. Mr. González (Chile) took the Chair.

33. Mr. JAWSHAN (Afghanistan) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPOUS) was an essential instrument for strengthening co-operation in outer space. His delegation noted with appreciation the financial assistance which some States and specialized agencies had given COPOUS, particularly regarding the organization of training and educational programmes under the auspices of the United Nations. It expressed the hope that the most advanced countries in that field would increase their assistance to the developing countries.

34. He welcomed the Committee's conclusions concerning the ways and means of guaranteeing that outer space would be maintained for peaceful purposes. He called attention to the proposal for the establishment of an international centre for joint research and technology for the benefit of developing countries, and said that the proposal submitted by a number of socialist countries (A/42/20, annex III) under agenda item 4 could greatly help to advance the Committee's work. Afghanistan, like the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the

(Mr. Jawshan, Afghanistan)

socialist countries, had always rejected any attempt to extend the arms race into outer space and it particularly regretted projects such as the Strategic Defense Initiative, known as "Star Wars". It therefore welcomed the Soviet-American negotiations in Geneva, which might pave the way for an agreement on the non-proliferation of weapons in outer space.

35. Mr. TEWARY (India) said that the application of space technology could effectively help to tackle some of the major development problems, provided that it was focused on obtaining practical results for the benefit of all nations. It was thus necessary to set up new mechanisms to extend the benefits of that technology immediately to all countries.

36. COPUOS was the appropriate forum for trying to reconcile States' training needs and the capabilities and experience available in a large number of countries. It was also necessary to ensure long-term project-oriented on-the-job training, which would serve to resolve a country's particular problems and train a sufficient number of specialists from each country in key application areas. Such measures required increased international co-operation.

37. India's programme for sharing its knowledge and experience in outer space with other countries was progressing satisfactorily. The global telecommunications system of the World Meteorological Organization received data provided by the very high-resolution radiometer of INSAT. India and the United States were also using its data in their joint monsoon research programme. The INSAT-1B satellite system, launched by the American space shuttle Challenger, had extended the national television network, which now covered 50 per cent of the population. India also had co-operation agreements with the European Space Agency, France, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, and, particularly, with the German Democratic Republic. In addition, it had organized workshops and provided training for specialists from other countries under its educational system.

38. The failures of a number of missions in 1986 had underscored the fragility of a system on which a large number of nations depended and the need to establish new mechanisms, both by individual nations and by bodies such as COPUOS. Despite certain setbacks, India had made substantial progress in space applications for development. It had initiated projects concerning particular applications in agriculture, land use, water resources, forestry, geology, marine resources and environment.

39. Since the end of the 1960s it had also been successfully pursuing a satellite launching programme, and believed that it could launch IRS-type remote sensing satellites by 1990 and, second-generation INSAT satellites by 1993 or 1994, thus making it totally self-reliant. It had also attempted to involve national industries in the space programme by transferring over 100 new technologies to them.

40. India believed that the work of COPUOS and of the Legal Sub-Committee was particularly useful for strengthening international co-operation and understanding. It hoped that pending questions would be resolved in the spirit of

(Mr. Tewary, India)

consensus which had characterized the deliberations of the two Committees, and that efforts would be made to overcome current financial difficulties.

41. His delegation firmly opposed the militarization of outer space. In article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, States had undertaken not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, or station weapons in outer space in any other manner. Unfortunately the space Powers were developing sophisticated new weapons that would revolutionize modern warfare and turn outer space into an armed camp.

42. The summit meetings held between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev during the preceding year had raised the hope that the prevailing stalemate in disarmament negotiations would be broken. India attached great importance to the proclaimed objectives of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, namely: to prevent an arms race in outer space, to end the arms race on Earth and, ultimately, to eliminate nuclear arms everywhere.

43. Collective security could be built only on mutual trust and co-operation. Prevention of the militarization of outer space was an arduous task. Yet given the will and the determination, the goal of total elimination of outer space weapons could be achieved through a gradual process of mutual concessions which must be initiated by practical steps as early as possible.

44. Mr. SCHLICHE (German Democratic Republic) said that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The situation continued to be complex and contradictory. On the one hand, a process of nuclear disarmament was beginning to take shape as was shown in the possibility of agreements on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles, but, on the other hand, the dimension of the arms race, and particularly the attempts to extend it to outer space, continued to be a matter for concern. In order to eliminate the nuclear threat, the German Democratic Republic advocated strict compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the non-militarization of outer space and a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests.

45. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had an important role to play in the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its mandate should be reaffirmed by the General Assembly at its forty-second session. The German Democratic Republic hoped that a consensus would emerge on the organization and methods which would be best suited to facilitate the progress of the Committee's work.

46. International co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space was assuming increasing importance. The benefits of joint scientific and technical activities was obvious, as had been demonstrated by such programmes as the COSPAS/SARSAT rescue system and the Kvant astrolaboratory. The peaceful use of outer space within a framework of co-operation among all States should make it

(Mr. Schlicke, German Democratic Republic)

possible to resolve the world's urgent problems in the field of economic development, protection of the environment and the development of new sources of energy. Many proposals had been made in that connection, including the three-stage programme proposed by the Soviet Union for greater international co-operation for the benefit of all. The German Democratic Republic supported the establishment of a world space organization and an international research centre which would provide assistance to the developing countries and train experts from those countries. A realistic appraisal of the needs of States in the field of space technology would be helpful in connection with the planning and implementation of future space activities. Careful consideration should be given to the idea of convening an international conference or a special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of making a comprehensive study of the prospects for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

47. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications was an essential component in the implementation of the recommendations made by UNISPACE 82. In the framework of that programme, the German Democratic Republic had offered three fellowships for the year 1987/88 on remote sensing of the Earth, geodesy by satellites and space research. A United Nations-sponsored training course on applications of remote sensing to the geological sciences had been held in Dresden in October 1987 and his Government was ready to assign experts to lecture at events in the context of the Programme.

48. Concerning the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, the elaboration of principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources should take into account the provisions of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

49. The German Democratic Republic attached great importance to the definition of outer space and the establishing of a boundary between airspace and outer space. It also considered that the discussion on the physical nature of the geostationary orbit and its rational and equitable use should be continued. In conclusion, it hoped that the Special Political Committee would be able to reach agreement on a new item for the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee.

50. Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria) said that the Working Group of the Whole established by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had agreed on a set of recommendations on means to improve the execution of activities relating to international co-operation in outer space and, in particular, activities relating to the Programme on Space Applications. Certain of those recommendations were of particular importance for developing countries, including those relating to training methods at the regional and international level and co-operation with the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations in the field of space science technology.

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

51. The Special Political Committee had for some time attached importance to international co-operation in the peaceful application of space science and technology, and the Secretary-General had himself taken measures to strengthen the capability of the Outer Space Affairs Division by providing additional technical personnel in 1983 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/90. Currently, funds were lacking for implementation of the proposed programmes. The allocation for 1987 had been reduced to \$US 48,000 compared with an original total of \$US 110,200. Member States should make efforts to increase their voluntary contributions to the Programme, but caution must be exercised to avoid starving it of badly-needed funds to enable it to discharge its mandate in accordance with the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and of the Working Group of the Whole. It was therefore important to increase the allocation through rearrangement of priorities within the next regular budget. The importance of the Programme for the developing countries was demonstrated by the fact that, between 1983 and 1986, there had been more than 1,500 applicants for the seminars and courses on advanced space technology. Out of that total, only 688 had been able to participate in a total of 22 training courses, workshops and meetings of experts. Long-term fellowships had been awarded to 42 candidates out of 226 applicants. It was apparent that the demand far exceeded the opportunities available. His delegation therefore appealed to Member States for more generous contributions to the Programme and for increased assistance from intergovernmental organizations. For its part, the Nigerian delegation had announced during the latest session of COPUOS that it would make a voluntary contribution of \$5,000 to the Programme. In April 1987, his Government had hosted, in co-operation with the Outer Space Affairs Division, the United Nations Meeting of Experts on Space Science and Technology and its Applications within the Framework of Educational Systems for the benefit of States members of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The participants had been able to outline principles regarding the definition of national goals, the formulation of policies and the implementation of strategies for the development of space science and technology and their application to local needs. They had also established guidelines and procedures for introducing elementary courses on technology into educational curricula of the different countries and had identified areas which should be given priority attention. In addition they had made recommendations to Governments on matters to be addressed at the regional level.

52. With regard to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, his delegation stressed that particular consideration should be given to the needs of developing countries, which should receive special assistance in the event of malfunctioning space objects with nuclear power sources on board or accidents causing the re-entry of such space objects. The progress made during the twenty-sixth session of the Legal Sub-Committee seemed to indicate that the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space could be completed in the next few years. His delegation felt that the proposals made by Canada constituted a good basis for further consideration of that question. Nigeria supported the distinction between assistance to States and compensation, which was the responsibility of the launching State. Emphasis should be placed on timely notification and international co-operation in the event of an unplanned re-entry

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

of space vehicles with nuclear power sources on board. The Working Group on nuclear power sources should be reconvened during the twenty-seventh session of the Legal Sub-Committee in order to continue the consideration of that question, including the activation of nuclear reactors in space vehicles. In that connection, Nigeria's position was that activation should be subject to attainment of nuclear-safe orbit.

53. The question of the definition and delimitation of the geostationary orbit had been considered by COPUOS for years without substantial progress being made. His delegation attached great importance to that question because of the progress made in space science and technology, which had made it possible to reduce the altitude and perigee of orbiting satellites. Such developments increased the risk of unauthorized surveillance for developing countries. There was no international agreement on the delimitation of outer space and, similarly, there were no universally recognized national space boundaries. Under such conditions, remote sensing of national natural resources had been carried out and certain information concerning national territories had been obtained without giving notification or requesting permission from the sensed States. The developing countries were at a particular disadvantage because of their lower level of space technology, in spite of the protection supposedly provided to them through the legal principles on remote sensing. With regard to the delimitation of outer space, his delegation reaffirmed its preference for a limit of 90 kilometres above the Earth's surface. Referring to the choice of a new item to be included in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, his delegation recalled that the first proposal made by the Group of 77 had enjoyed wide support from Member States and had subsequently been amended and amplified in order to take into consideration the concerns of certain delegations, general principles of international law, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. At its thirtieth session, COPUOS had recommended that a decision should be taken on that question at the forty-second session of the General Assembly, and his delegation hoped that the proposal of the Group of 77 would be adopted.

54. With regard to developments in space science and technology in Nigeria, he said that digital telecommunication systems had been introduced in order to improve satellite telecommunications. Improved maritime communications were also being planned. The progress in those two areas had been significant. The National Committee on Space Science and Technology had been strengthened to enable it to meet requirements in specific areas, such as remote sensing. The priority objective was still the training of appropriate technical personnel and the Nigerian Government hoped to receive assistance in that field from the Outer Space Affairs Division and competent specialized agencies.

55. Mr. PERRI (Brazil) said that in 1987 the international community was commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the launching of the first man-made Earth satellite, Sputnik. Since then, man had landed on the Moon and sent probes to other celestial bodies. The United Nations, for its part, had established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which dealt with inter-State relations in that new field of human activities. Through its Legal Sub-Committee,

(Mr. Perri, Brazil)

COPUOS had been able to elaborate a body of international norms and principles which currently formed the core of international space law. The most recent contribution to that endeavour had been the adoption of General Assembly resolution 41/65 on principles relating to remote sensing, after more than a decade of negotiations. However, there were still broader perspectives ahead for strengthening the legal framework for space activities, which should foster technological progress and international co-operation in that area. Those goals could not be achieved unless outer space continued to be used for peaceful purposes only. COPUOS should therefore be allowed to identify space activities which were inconsistent with the maintenance of peace.

56. It was encouraging to note that a Working Group of the Whole had been established during the twenty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in order to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. Thanks to that evaluation, the Sub-Committee had been able to adopt concrete recommendations on that question. The Working Group had noted, inter alia, that the budget for the Programme on Space Applications had been reduced to less than half of its original appropriation for the biennium 1986-1987. His delegation felt that that undesirable trend might undermine the efforts of the Outer Space Affairs Division and the Expert on Space Applications. Brazil actively supported the Programme on Space Applications by providing long-term fellowships in remote sensing and, for that reason, he appealed to other States, particularly those with major space capabilities, to join the small group of countries which made voluntary contributions to the Programme.

57. It was disappointing to note that the work of the Legal Sub-Committee at its twenty-sixth session had been much less fruitful. Brazil attached great importance to the task of elaborating draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Owing to the size of its territory, Brazil was particularly exposed to the consequences of the uncontrolled re-entry of a space object with a nuclear power source on board. Unfortunately, the prospects for progress evident at the 1986 session of the Sub-Committee had not materialized in the past year. It was necessary to step up efforts to bridge the gap between the national positions in that area. Similarly modest progress had been made with regard to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit. The delimitation of outer space constituted a political as well as a legal problem pertaining to the applicability of space laws to concrete situations. That question should therefore be resolved through an internationally binding legal instrument. Brazil favoured the elaboration of a special legal régime which took into account the special needs of the developing countries.

58. With regard to the choice of a new agenda item for the Legal Sub-Committee, his country supported the proposal made by the Group of 77 for an item on consideration of the legal aspects related to access of States to the benefits derived from the exploration and utilization of outer space, because it felt that that proposal was the only one that satisfied the necessary conditions of timeliness, legal relevance and universality of scope. The work of the

(Mr. Perri, Brazil)

Sub-Committee, which was the only multilateral body for negotiations on legal instruments on outer space, should fulfil the expectations of the international community. The best way to rationalize its work was to give it a full mandate and for all its members to show the necessary political will to achieve concrete progress in the areas under consideration.

59. Mrs. RUIZ-ZAPATA (Mexico) requested the Chairman to give more time to those members of the Committee who might wish to make comments in reply to the letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/SPC/42/L.5).

60. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee acceded to that request, it being understood that the views which members wished to express on that question would be transmitted to him in writing as speedily as possible so that he could communicate them to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

61. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.