



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 33: POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA
(continued) (A/SPC/42/L.3/Add.14-18)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to new requests for hearings (A/SPC/42/L.3/Add.14-18) relating to agenda item 33. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

2. It was so decided.

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 (A/42/20)
- (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/42/518 and Corr.1)

3. Mr. BAALI (Algeria) said that the international community had always hoped that the arms race would never extend into outer space. Such hopes had, however, been thwarted, and the best means of preventing the militarization of outer space was not only to halt the arms race but also to develop international co-operation.

4. While recognizing that disarmament questions were dealt with by the First Committee, his delegation considered that, in view of the impasse reached in the multilateral negotiations, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) should shoulder its responsibilities fully in order to guarantee the effective progress of space activities.

5. The recommendations of UNISPACE 82 should be implemented expeditiously. It was extremely regrettable that a lack of funds and, indeed, a lack of political will had allowed those recommendations to go unheeded. While it was commendable to set up a working group of the whole to evaluate accomplishments so far, it was up to the international community as a whole to define the areas of activity calling for greater international co-operation. In that connection, due account should be taken of the needs and interests of the developing countries.

6. With regard to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, Algeria believed that it was vital to ensure that the systems used were complementary and interactive, and that the sensed States, in particular the developing countries, had the right to obtain information that concerned them. It was appropriate, in that connection, to pay tribute to those countries which provided meteorological data free of charge. In view of the importance of remote-sensing activities with regard to the development process, his delegation hoped that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would devote sufficient time to that topic at its next session.

(Mr. Baali, Algeria)

7. Regrettably, no progress had been made with regard to the examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit. His delegation considered that legal principles should be worked out to guarantee the rights of all countries in that field.
8. Little progress had been made, either, with regard to the definition and delimitation of outer space. It was necessary to reach an agreement as soon as possible in order to fill the gaps in that important area of international law.
9. With regard to the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the Sub-Committee should make use of the numerous proposals put before it, in particular those of Argentina and Chile.
10. With regard to the new item for inclusion in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, his delegation unreservedly supported the proposal made by the Group of 77 and thought that the Special Political Committee should take a decision on the subject.
11. He did not agree that the length of the sessions of the Legal Sub-Committee should be reduced. It was vital for the international community to work out principles by which all countries, without exception, could derive benefit from space activities and from the unprecedented technical development to which they had given rise in recent decades.
12. Mr. PHAM NGAC (Viet Nam) said that the past 30 years had witnessed remarkable achievements in the space field, which had already produced a beneficial spin-off on Earth. International co-operation with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space had helped to narrow the gap between many less developed countries and the more advanced nations. Although his country had very limited resources, it devoted a substantial amount to space research, which it endeavoured to exploit in the service of its development. Its co-operation with other socialist countries (in the Intersputnik and Intercosmos programmes) and with United Nations bodies had enabled Viet Nam to progress in many fields.
13. Unfortunately, that was only one side of reality. Parallel with those achievements, there was a growing militarization of outer space, which constituted a threat to humanity as a whole. "Star Wars" no longer belonged to science fiction.
14. The extension of the arms race into outer space would entail an enormous waste of resources and serve only to worsen the position of the developing countries, which in any case enjoyed only a meagre share of the profits of space research, not to mention the disastrous effects on international relations.
15. Accordingly, his delegation had frequently expressed the view that it was perfectly appropriate for the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to discuss the question of preventing the militarization of outer space, which was linked with its mandate. Furthermore, for several years COPUOS had given priority to the discussion of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful

(Mr. Pham Ngac, Viet Nam)

purposes, and its report recognized that it could make a significant contribution to that end. The procedural points raised by certain Member States had unfortunately prevented it from so doing. The best means of achieving that objective was to strengthen international co-operation through multilateral, regional and bilateral activities and to implement projects of benefit to all countries, in particular the developing countries. His delegation would support unreservedly any initiative designed to bring a halt to the militarization of outer space.

16. Referring to the activities of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, he said that, in common with many third world countries, Viet Nam was concerned about the substantial cut in the regular budget to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The developing countries would be the first to suffer the effects of that measure. Proposals to solve that problem must be taken into due consideration during the current session.

17. For many political, legal and practical reasons, his delegation considered that the definition and delimitation of outer space should be achieved as soon as possible, as a first step towards the conclusion of a multilateral agreement. At its next session, COPUOS should make more vigorous efforts to overcome the obstacles that were holding up its work. In particular, a legal régime should be worked out to guarantee the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit, taking account of the interests of the developing countries. The use of satellites for direct television broadcasting should be governed by an international agreement, the bases of which should be worked out by COPUOS.

18. His delegation hoped that the Special Political Committee would add to the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee the item proposed by the Group of 77 (A/AC.105/C.2/L.162).

19. Mr. DVORNYI (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the launching of the first satellite, 30 years before, had opened up for the international community a new era of space exploration, as a prelude to the conquest of the universe. His country was carrying out its space activities in close collaboration with the principal research centres of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and within the framework of programmes such as the Intercosmos programme and bodies such as the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautics Federation (IAF).

20. The extended periods of use of manned orbital stations, the increase in their capabilities for action and the performance of numerous scientific experiments made it necessary to build sizeable structures in space. In order to carry out that programme, his country had developed the parts, techniques and apparatus enabling the bearing frame to be put together in space. Experiments on the ground had been carried out in order to assess use possibilities for concentrated solar energy, both in earth conditions and in micro-gravity conditions.

(Mr. Dvornyi, Ukrainian SSR)

21. Ukrainian scientists were going ahead with preparations for space flights to explore the planets and other celestial bodies of the solar system. Persons engaged in botanical research had devised techniques for growing plants in artificial soil and, in the interest of the national economy, the Ukraine was implementing a long-term programme for the use of remote sensing techniques.
22. Within the framework of international co-operation, the central astronomical observatory of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had set up an international centre for the collection of data on Halley's comet, under the international Vega project. In accordance with the decision of the Interkosmos Council, the Interbol international project, in collaboration with Bulgaria, would be carried out in 1989. The Ukraine was also participating in the "Black Sea-Interkosmos" ocean-study programme. Those various projects were aimed at developing co-operation between States, according to their needs.
23. It was in that spirit that Mr. Gorbachev had proposed before the Indian Parliament the establishment, for the developing countries, of an international centre for co-operation in research and technology, which would include a centre for training specialists, especially astronauts, and a launching pad. The centre would help to usher in "star peace". The Ukraine also attached great importance to the Soviet proposal regarding the establishment of a world space organization in which co-operation in the peaceful uses of space could be developed. The major space Powers had a particularly important role to play in that regard, and the Ukraine had welcomed the signing on 15 April 1987 of the Soviet-American Co-operation Agreement, which should make it easier to find acceptable solutions for preventing the militarization of space. The Soviet Union had also announced that it was ready to exchange information on space achievements with all States and to launch peaceful space objects on behalf of other States and international organizations, under mutually acceptable conditions.
24. The Ukraine recommended that the Committee should approve the COPUOS report (A/42/20) and reiterated that co-operation, extended to all States without exception, should usher in an age of peace.
25. Mr. KIKUCHI (Japan) said that, having adopted by consensus at the preceding session the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, the General Assembly had taken a major step forward in the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. He hoped that the same spirit of co-operation would prevail for the continuation of the work of COPUOS and its Sub-Committees.
26. In 1960 Japan had initiated its own space programme and in 1968 it had set up the Space Activities Committee in order to accelerate it. The Consultative Committee on Long-Term Policy, established in 1985, would study ways of developing the space programme, taking into account the rapid progress achieved in that field both nationally and internationally. In a recent report that Committee had said that space activities should enable mankind to make progress in various scientific and technical fields. International co-operation was therefore crucial, and Japan

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

was committed to promoting it. For example, the Japanese Meteorological Agency was directly transmitting to the 13 countries in the ESCAP region cloud pictures obtained from its geostationary meteorological satellite. The marine observation satellite (MOS-1), launched in February, should enable basic remote-sensing techniques to be developed; it had already transmitted useful data for forestry, fisheries, topographical and geological surveys and resources development. Japan was planning to implement together with the ASEAN countries a research programme on data analysis techniques. That programme was expected to promote the application of the knowledge derived through space activities. Training courses in remote sensing and satellite communications, held annually by Japan, were another example of Japan's co-operation activities in space research.

27. Regarding the use of nuclear power sources in space, he regretted the fact that, despite intensive discussion at its previous session, the Legal Sub-Committee had not been able to reach a consensus on any of the remaining principles. His delegation did, however, recognize the usefulness of that session, during which many concrete proposals had been made. As the principles to be drawn up had to be scientifically credible, some of the questions would have to be referred to the experts in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in order to facilitate the Legal Sub-Committee's task. His delegation was pleased to note in that connection that there seemed to be agreement on reconvening the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space at the Sub-Committee's next session. His delegation continued to believe that the definition and delimitation of outer space was of neither scientific nor practical interest. Regarding utilization of the geostationary orbit, which was a limited resource and therefore to be used efficiently and economically, it should not be forgotten that it was governed by the Outer Space Treaty. Questions on its use came within the terms of reference of the ITU.

28. His delegation regretted that the Legal Sub-Committee had been unable to reach a consensus on the choice of a new item. The item proposed by the United Kingdom, concerning enhanced co-operation between States in the event of accident or emergency on board a manned space object endangering the lives or health of the crew, was worthy of consideration.

29. At its previous session, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had set up a working group of the whole to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. His delegation welcomed the decision to reconvene the group and hoped that the international co-operation activities would be carried out more efficiently. Regarding the improvement of the Sub-Committee's working methods, the practice of choosing a special theme for each session had proved particularly fruitful. The symposium organized by COSPAR and IAF on the theme of the previous session (Space communications for development) had been very instructive. COSPAR and IAF should be invited to organize a symposium on the question of microgravity experiments in space and their applications, and on developments in the geosphere-biosphere programmes.

30. At the twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions the members of COPUOS had felt that strengthening international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space also

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

implied the need to rationalize the working methods of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, which could, for example, meet simultaneously, thereby saving on financial and human resources. A working group should be set up to study that proposal.

31. Mr. HUANG Jiahua (China) said that the launching of the first artificial satellite 30 years ago had heralded a new era. The first treaty on outer space, signed 10 years later, demonstrated the international community's desire to explore and use outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind. International co-operation - whether bilateral, multilateral or regional - had enabled more countries to benefit from applications of space science and technology. Over the past decades, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as the principal multilateral body, had made tremendous contributions to the expansion of international co-operation and exchanges in that field, and to the progressive development of space law and the popularization of space technology for the benefit of all countries, in particular the developing countries.

32. Over the past year, China's space activities had continued to progress. His country had successfully launched and recovered two satellites and had been able to study micro-gravity in outer space by using, for the first time, recoverable satellites. In addition, it had provided satellite-launching services to a foreign company, thus opening up broader prospects for the expansion of international co-operation in that field. China was ready to co-operate, within the limit of its capacities, with all other countries.

33. His delegation was satisfied with the work of COPUOS and its Sub-Committees. The peaceful use of outer space presupposed the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Although the two Sub-Committees had made no substantive progress in the consideration of the items on their agendas, the exchanges of views had made it possible to clarify positions and to agree on the direction of its future work. His delegation noted with satisfaction that, in view of the deliberations of the previous two sessions and in the light of scientific and technological progress, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had made some adjustments in the items under consideration and had retained certain more up-to-date scientific items for its next session. Those efforts, as well as the organization of a symposium during the session, would promote the exchange of information among countries.

34. Since the Legal Sub-Committee had completed its work on the draft Principles relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, it had received constructive proposals on the choice of a new item. Scientific and technological progress posed problems of a practical nature which should be regulated by legal instruments. The new item should make it possible to consider an essential aspect of space legislation. In order to take into consideration the views of all sides, his delegation was inclined to agree to the inclusion of a comprehensive item consisting of several sub-items which were more or less related.

35. China highly commended the role of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in implementing the various recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and, in

(Mr. Huang Jiahua, China)

particular, its role in helping the developing countries to enhance their capabilities in that field. His delegation welcomed the fact that, despite its financial difficulties, the Organization had been able to continue its co-operation projects with the invaluable support of the countries concerned. The Chinese Government would contribute to that programme, with the assistance of the Outer Space Affairs Division, by organizing, in the autumn of 1988, an international symposium on space telecommunications and televised educational programmes broadcast by satellite.

36. Mr. NUÑEZ (Cuba) regretted that, at a time when countries were commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the launching of the first Sputnik and the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the results of COPUOS' work over the last three years had been negative. A minority of countries continued to obstruct any progress in that Committee by insisting on the so-called need to maintain a consensus, while consensus had meaning only when it was a token of States' willingness to negotiate. At the same time, certain countries continued to advance the thesis according to which the Committee was not competent to discuss disarmament issues, arguing that that issue fell within the competence of the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee. However, no progress had been made in either of those two bodies. It was therefore necessary to conclude that certain countries were deliberately obstructing any negotiations on that issue.

37. While there was reason to welcome the agreement on the elimination of short- and medium-range nuclear missiles which would soon be concluded between the United States and the Soviet Union, he could only regret the continuation of programmes such as the so-called "Strategic Defense Initiative", which was an unnecessary waste of resources in the light of the current economic crisis, which did not spare even the most advanced countries. As President Fidel Castro had recently emphasized, mankind still lived in fear of self-annihilation and suffered under the yoke of abject poverty which every year in the third world took the lives of as many children as there would be victims of 100 nuclear bombs.

38. It was therefore clear that economic and social development required countries to show real political will in order to prevent the militarization of outer space. International co-operation must therefore be strengthened, and, in particular, agreement should be reached as soon as possible on the definition and delimitation of outer space and on the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit. It was essential, at the very least, to adopt the proposal submitted by the Group of 77 on the inclusion of a new item in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee. Failure to do that would only underscore the precariousness of the consensus which COPUOS had reached in recent years and would lead to the conclusion that the consensus rule hampered the successful conduct of the work of the Committee.

39. Mr. RADENKOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that the progress achieved in the past 30 years in the field of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space was in keeping with the hopes which all mankind placed in space applications for the promotion of development and peace.

(Mr. Radenković, Yugoslavia)

40. Yugoslavia, like so many other countries, considered that the promotion of international co-operation was the best way to preserve outer space, which was the common heritage of mankind. Although a certain degree of progress had been made in that area, the results were far from satisfactory, and only the demonstration of real political will would make it possible to strengthen co-operation for the benefit of all countries. Yugoslavia supported all the co-operation activities conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and hoped that the financial difficulties would soon be overcome. The activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the co-ordination of space activities in the United Nations system were particularly important, especially with regard to the training of personnel in developing countries. Sufficient resources should be allocated to the Programme in order to enable it to continue its activities.

41. Yugoslavia attached great importance to the broader use of the results of remote sensing for the promotion of development. It was in favour of the adoption of the principles on the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space. It hoped that progress would be made in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, the rational utilization of the geostationary orbit in the interest of all countries and the prevention of all forms of the militarization of outer space. Yugoslavia supported the proposal submitted by the Group of 77 on the inclusion of a new item in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee. The consideration of that item would help to strengthen international co-operation in the interest of all countries, in particular the developing countries, some of which had become space Powers. Since little progress had been made in recent years, his delegation was convinced that the only available course of action was to redouble efforts to promote international co-operation and to reject any spirit of confrontation.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.