



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

later: Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria)

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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
(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. Mr. JATIVA (Ecuador) said that 1987 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the launching into space of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, which had been the point of departure for space exploration. Since then, mankind had watched the spectacular progress of space science and technology accompanied, at the multilateral level, by the creation of institutional mechanisms for co-ordination and regulation such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

2. Ecuador was concerned over the fact that the constant development of space technology continued to be in inverse proportion to the slow consolidation of space law. Since space law had to be grounded on the concept of international co-operation, the slowness of its development suggested the absence of the minimum political will needed. The consensus on that issue should lead to the adoption of constructive, action-oriented measures. International co-operation in the space field must become an instrument for transferring to the developing countries the knowledge and practical data gained from space activities and an instrument for regulating those activities so as to enable all States to share in the benefits derived from them. For instance, the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) must be applied more effectively and in that connection the work done by the Working Group of the Whole to evaluate their implementation had been useful. There was also an urgent need to find a satisfactory solution to the financial situation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, because the draconian reduction of its already limited budget was hampering the efforts of countries which, like Ecuador, depended upon it for manpower training. Ecuador therefore asked all States which were in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Programme.

3. His delegation deplored the fruitlessness of the discussions on the new agenda item proposed by the Group of 77 at both the twenty-sixth session of the Legal Sub-Committee and the 1987 session of COPUOS. The proposed new item fulfilled the conditions of timeliness, legal interest, and advantage for all States, and Ecuador hoped that at its next session the Sub-Committee would agree to include that item in its agenda. The application of divergent criteria had also prevented progress on the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, despite the submission of a revised working paper by Canada. There had been a similar lack of progress in the consideration of questions relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space, the effect of which had been to perpetuate the absurd notion that a branch of international law, space law, did not have a well-defined physical sphere of application.

(Mr. Jativa, Ecuador)

4. His delegation noted with satisfaction that substantial progress had been made at the 1987 session of the Legal Sub-Committee on the principles governing the geostationary orbit, when the consideration of two working papers, one submitted by Ecuador and other countries and one by the German Democratic Republic, had made it possible to identify areas of agreement. The result was unequivocal proof that the majority of States were resolved to give broader consideration to that question and elaborate draft principles governing the equitable use of that precious natural resource. His delegation had constantly insisted on the urgency of doing so given the risk of saturating the geostationary orbit, a risk aggravated by the possibility that more refined technology might be used to increase the capacity of that natural resource, thus making access by developing countries to appropriate and economical orbital positions still more difficult. Ecuador had likewise always insisted that the Legal Sub-Committee was the most competent body to elaborate a legal instrument governing the various utilizations of the orbit, which were not limited to telecommunications. It hoped that the elaboration of the draft principles would continue on the basis of the areas of agreement and with the participation of the space Powers, which unfortunately had not taken part in the work on the question in 1987. The aim would be to ensure access to the geostationary orbit and its equitable use, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries whose preferential rights and whose obligations with regard to the segments of the orbit superjacent to their territories must be recognized. It should be stressed that the equatorial countries were not making claims of sovereignty but that they were seeking the establishment of a sui generis legal régime, given the nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit.

5. His Government was categorically opposed to the militarization of outer space which should be preserved as a zone of peace in the service of all mankind. It therefore once again urged the parties directly concerned to renew their efforts and to enter into negotiations in order to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space. COPUOS must support measures aimed at avoiding such an extension because its future was closely linked to the success of such negotiations and of the negotiations taking place within the Conference on Disarmament.

6. Mr. KOVACIC^V (Czechoslovakia) recalled that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, and should be the province of all mankind.

7. Modern-day advances in science and technology demanded the development of international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. A programme of joint international activities in the field had already been put forward: the three-stage programme of practical steps that States could take in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, proposed by the Soviet Union. That programme, whose implementation was unreservedly supported by Czechoslovakia, aimed to develop international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space in order to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space. Other proposals had been made during the current session, but they had not all provided the necessary conditions for consensus.

(Mr. Kovačič, Czechoslovakia)

8. The Committee must ask itself if the problems relating to ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes were really insoluble within the framework of the Committee or if they arose out of the unwillingness of some States to give up the possibility of a military and economic utilization of outer space for their own benefit. There was also the question of whether the problem lay in determining the competence of the Committee to deal with the question of the non-militarization of outer space or was created by the fact that the peaceful proposals of some delegations were unacceptable to others.

9. The socialist countries believed that the militarization of outer space could be countered by constructive and peaceful alternatives such as the realistic prospects for "star peace", the idea of convening an international conference or a special session of the General Assembly devoted to questions of outer space, establishing a world outer space organization and elaborating a detailed plan for international co-operation in the 1990s and beyond. The fact that such a programme represented an alternative to the "star wars" plans and that it had been advocated by the socialist countries explained why some States were trying to bar effective progress on that question in COPUOS. That Committee thus found itself in an absurd situation, because the same countries which had opposed its consideration of disarmament issues were also opposing its consideration of questions of international co-operation in the application of space technology, as proposed by the socialist countries, which had nothing to do with disarmament issues.

10. In the choice of a new item for the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, a similar lack of political will could be seen, even though several proposals had been submitted by all groups of States. The selection of the new agenda item should not be postponed because that would impair the effectiveness and rationalization of the work of COPUOS.

11. On the initiative of socialist countries, the General Assembly was discussing at the current session the question of establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security. Peaceful co-operation in outer space and measures to prevent the spread of weapons to outer space were a significant part of such a system. Among the concrete steps to be taken, anti-satellite weapons and offensive-weapon systems in space should be prohibited. An international inspection body could also be set up to monitor the non-deployment of weapons from space-launch facilities. Such action would help achieve the objective of peace in outer space, which was one of the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. Ten years earlier, in May 1977, two significant agreements had been signed in Geneva, the Soviet-United States Agreement on Co-operation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes and the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. Those agreements had been concluded six years before the announcement of the plans to place so-called defensive weapons in space that were jeopardizing international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. In the spring of 1987, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and the United States had signed a new agreement in Moscow on co-operation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes, covering specific research projects on the solar

(Mr. Kovačič, Czechoslovakia)

system, the implementation of which would contribute to consolidating the bases of peace in outer space. That instrument had been described as a "treaty of the future" and his delegation hoped that it would expedite the search for a solution to the existing problems.

12. Czechoslovakia welcomed the progress made by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in its work, but believed that it was not the appropriate body for publicizing the results achieved in the exploration of space on a national level. A scientific symposium organized on the occasion of the Sub-Committee sessions would be a more appropriate forum. The sessions of the Sub-Committee should focus on ways of improving international co-operation in outer space, particularly in the technical and scientific sphere. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee was not the place for transfer of technology, but was rather a body that should endeavour to create the conditions for effecting such a transfer on a basis of equality and non-discrimination. At its session in June, COPUOS had dealt with the planning of its future work. In that connection, his delegation proposed that consideration of the proposal to establish a world space organization should be included in part I of the medium-term plan of the United Nations. The Special Political Committee and COPUOS could ask interested delegations to submit for more detailed consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee at its 1988 session a draft proposal for the establishment of such an organization. The results of such consideration would then be submitted to the Special Political Committee at the forty-third session of the General Assembly. In that connection, his delegation supported the proposals made by the Soviet representative at the current session of the Special Political Committee on 5 November 1987, as well as the proposals submitted by the Group of 77.

13. His delegation attached great importance to the efforts to strengthen the role of COPUOS and its Legal Sub-Committee in the development of space law. Some progress had been made in the current year on the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, on the basis of a Canadian proposal. The possibilities for progress in that field of law were linked closely to the settlement of certain sensitive technical and political issues. Account must also be taken of the provisions of international instruments in the field of both space law and the utilization of nuclear energy, particularly the two Vienna Conventions concluded in 1986 under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency. His delegation supported the latest proposal by the Soviet Union on the question related to the definition and delimitation of outer space, which offered a way to a practical solution of that problem. It was convinced that all groups of States should demonstrate sufficient good will in the interests of finding a generally acceptable solution to the problems connected with the rational use of the geostationary orbit.

14. The current session of the General Assembly was being held at a time when a significant agreement on the elimination of a portion of the nuclear arsenal was within reach of mankind, and his delegation hoped that the spirit of such an agreement would influence the sessions of COPUOS as well and would be instrumental in promoting further progress in the peaceful uses of outer space.

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15. Mrs. NAVCHAA (Mongolia) observed that the international community was commemorating in the current year the thirtieth anniversary of the launching of the satellite, Sputnik, which marked the beginning of the space age. Since then, the United Nations had taken an active part in developing international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and in the elaboration of legal norms governing the space activities of States. The first important result of such activities had been the conclusion of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which continued to serve the interests of all States favouring the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The achievement of that objective was very timely at the moment because of the intensification of efforts to carry out "star wars" plans.

16. The Committee and COPUOS should make specific recommendations to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space, and COPUOS should help the Conference on Disarmament in that area. The scientific, technical and legal aspects of the non-militarization of outer space could be considered by the two competent Sub-Committees. In connection with that priority issue, the socialist countries had made some specific proposals for developing international co-operation in outer space. Unfortunately, those compromise proposals had not been adopted because of the obstructionist attitude of some States, and COPUOS had thus not been able to advance in its consideration of that important question. Mongolia found that situation to be a cause for anxiety, and it was one that also alarmed the majority of States. Energetic steps must be taken to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space, for otherwise the arms race was likely to get completely out of control.

17. Mongolia supported international co-operation in the exploration and uses of outer space and participated actively in the international INTERCOSMOS programme. It believed that the conquest, exploration and utilization of outer space would be more effective if international co-operation were organized within the context of a single mechanism, and it therefore supported the Soviet proposal for the establishment of an international space organization, a proposal which should be considered carefully.

18. Mongolia believed that it was important to put into effect the recommendations of UNISPACE-82 and that the Working Group of the Whole had done useful work in evaluating them. It also supported the United Nations Programme on Space Applications which was very important for the implementation of the recommendations.

19. Regarding the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, his delegation hoped that progress would soon be made on the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. Member States could finalize the principles for early notification and assistance which had already been provisionally adopted by bringing them into line with the provisions of the Conventions adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency in that field. With reference to the delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, Mongolia felt that the specific proposals which had already been made could serve as a basis for continuing consideration of that question.

(Mrs. Navchaa, Mongolia)

20. In conclusion, her delegation hoped that it would be possible to reach agreement during the current session of the General Assembly on the choice of a new item for the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee.
21. Mr. LAGORIO (Argentina) said that the launching of Sputnik in 1957 had opened up a new era, that of the conquest of space, in which man had yet again shown his unshakeable determination to overcome all obstacles, as he had when he had conquered the oceans. It was high time that COPUOS sought to harmonize, realistically and calmly, the various future legal and scientific trends of the space age. His task had been and would continue to be hard, from the political point of view, but it should not be forgotten that, far from being a place for confrontation, space should provide an opportunity for intensive international co-operation.
22. The events which had occurred during the past few months with respect to disarmament, especially the possibility of eliminating a whole category of nuclear weapons, were particularly encouraging. In that connection, the question of the peaceful use of outer space should give new impetus to international co-operation in that field, which should be based on the broadest consensus possible as a means of attaining the desired goal.
23. His delegation had played an active part in the work of the twenty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the twenty-sixth session of the Legal Sub-Committee as well as in that of the thirtieth session of COPUOS, where it had expressed its Government's views; it would especially like to emphasize two points, which were also of concern to the developing countries.
24. It welcomed the establishment of a Working Group of the Whole to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82; under the wise Chairmanship of Mr. Lasarte of Uruguay, that Group had usefully filled a gap in the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. It was to be hoped that the Group would help to speed up the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.
25. The Working Group of the Legal Sub-Committee had adopted a draft resolution the new paragraph 5 of which clearly requested the Legal Sub-Committee to consider, at its twenty-seventh session to be held at Geneva in March 1988, the new item which it had chosen for inclusion in its agenda. Paragraph 5 was very clear in that respect, and his delegation would join the consensus which had already emerged concerning that text.
26. In conclusion, he noted that the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, had been signed 20 years previously; that should encourage the General Assembly to increase its efforts to ensure that outer space should continue to be used for peaceful purposes.
27. Mr. MONTGOMERY (United States of America) drew attention to document A/AC.105/384/Add.3, which reviewed fully United States activities with respect to outer space.

(Mr. Montgomery, United States)

28. His delegation attached very high priority to the effectiveness of COPUOS because it believed that improving the structure of that Committee, as the only standing body in the United Nations system that dealt with co-operation in outer space, would strengthen the Organization as a whole and provide answers to those who wanted to replace it with vague international institutions.

29. Reviewing the work of the Committee over the past year, he noted that it had been able to strengthen the scientific and technological content of its activity and keep members abreast of the latest developments in space research.

30. According to General Assembly resolution 37/90, which provided the framework for implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, all new activities should be funded through voluntary contributions as well as through the rearrangement of priorities within the United Nations regular budget. In that connection, his delegation noted with satisfaction that the Working Group of the Whole established by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had identified measures which would facilitate the implementation of those recommendations. It regretted, however, that the Outer Space Affairs Division had not taken the necessary steps to rearrange priorities. It was to be hoped that in 1988 it would be possible to reconcile the views of the Division and the members of COPUOS, which were currently very divergent.

31. Reminding the Committee that in an earlier statement, members had been warned about the role of automatic minorities and majorities, he noted that that remark was very relevant to work on agenda item 76. There was, in fact, a small but vocal minority in the Outer Space Committee which desired to forgo consensus. That was apparently the attitude of one of the preceding speakers. Through a selective reading of the historical record, he had sought to create the impression that there was no basis for consensus in the activities of COPUOS. It was well known that it was not the United States but other delegations which had insisted on the adoption of that procedure. That had been one of several reasons why COPUOS had met only once between 1958 and 1961. Only at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly had the members of the Outer Space Committee reached agreement. From 1962 it had begun to adopt its decisions by consensus.

32. The United States, which had always respected that rule, believed that the Outer Space Committee could work effectively only if all members abided by their commitments. Some considered that the principle of consensus had become an impediment to substantive progress. They should be reminded that on that basis four international treaties had been adopted and it had been possible to develop principles relating to remote sensing. On complex, sensitive matters where the interests of all had to be reconciled, there was no better method than consensus. Negotiations on that basis presupposed not only that there was a commitment to achieve progress in those areas where agreement was possible but also to avoid confrontation where fundamental differences existed.

33. The nations which had supported the resolution establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1958 had wisely judged it

(Mr. Montgomery, United States)

necessary to separate the problems of disarmament affecting outer space from those relating to its peaceful use. The First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament had been then, and still were, the competent multilateral forums for discussion of disarmament aspects of outer space.

34. During its 30 years' existence, COPUOS had made a unique contribution to international co-operation. The United States, with seven other States, had submitted working papers in order to initiate a process of dialogue on all aspects of its work. Although the United States had some ideas on what needed to be done to make COPUOS better able to fulfil its mandate and bring the benefits of space research to all nations, it did not claim to have all the answers.

35. Unfortunately, certain States refused to acknowledge the urgent need to review the organization and methods of work of COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies. Those which refused were also those which had enthusiastically made vague proposals for new international machinery; their proposals were self-promoting rather than conducive to genuine co-operation. Proposals for convening a conference or a special session of the General Assembly to discuss, inter alia, the establishment of an international space organization were equally unproductive. The considerable resources needed for such an undertaking would be better applied to supporting existing mechanisms for international co-operation.

36. One of the previous speakers had quoted excerpts from a statement attributed to participants at the space seminar held in Moscow, in which United States experts had taken part. In the interest of accuracy, his delegation wished to point out that there was a significant discrepancy between the statement adopted by the seminar and the version given in Pravda in its edition of 6 October 1987. The errors in that version had been perpetuated by that previous speaker. The authentic text of the statement adopted contained no reference to weapons in space. A proposal made in that regard by the sponsors of the seminar had in fact been rejected. His delegation expressed its disappointment that the contents of the said statement continued to be misrepresented.

37. Mr. SANCHEZ (Philippines) said that his country's position on the issues before the Outer Space Committee proceeded from the profound conviction that space activities must be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes. That was why his delegation had repeatedly opposed the militarization of outer space.

38. His delegation considered that the benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space must be shared with the developing countries. To that end, international co-operation at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels should be strengthened and specific projects for advancing the capabilities of the developing countries in the use of space technologies should be promoted.

39. The Philippines was keenly interested in the applications of space technology because of its geographical location and physical configuration. It was essential to provide the country with a communications network which could link the 7,100 islands of the archipelago.

(Mr. Sanchez, Philippines)

40. Remote-sensing services were an indispensable tool in a country whose economy was based on natural resources. They were also useful in regional and urban planning, cartography and environmental studies. Moreover, for a country which was victimized by an average of 19 tropical typhoons and cyclones yearly, not to speak of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, satellite imagery contributed greatly to the prevention of the effects of natural disasters.

41. Regrettably, most developing countries did not have the minimal degree of competence needed for sharing in the benefits of outer space exploration and utilization - hence the importance of the co-operation activities which the United Nations Programme on Space Applications carried out in education, training, research and institutional development. In that regard, his delegation was concerned that the resources allocated for the United Nations Space Applications Programme for 1986 and 1987 had been reduced by more than 50 per cent. The United Nations Expert on Space Applications could not reasonably be expected to meet the demands of Member States with a budget of \$48,000. It was to be hoped that the situation would improve in 1988 and that in future the Outer Space Affairs Division would forewarn delegations of impending cuts in the programme budget, so that corresponding measures could be taken.

42. His delegation wished to make some recommendations concerning the planning of training courses on remote sensing, communications and meteorology technologies under the Programme. Those activities should include on-the-job training to provide developing countries with needed technicians. The trainees should also be provided with copies of the software used during the training courses to enable them to apply the knowledge acquired to their fields of expertise.

43. His delegation appreciated the results of the first series of meetings of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's Working Group of the Whole responsible for evaluating the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. It fully endorsed the recommendations of the Group contained in paragraphs 11 to 13 of annex II to the Committee's report (A/42/20). They might serve as a basis for far-reaching international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. He hoped that, at its following meeting, the Working Group would consider the question of the co-ordination of a regional/subregional network whose responsibility would be to facilitate exchanges of information, particularly among developing countries. The real requirements and perspectives of such countries should also be kept in mind when identifying the programmes, projects and activities which should be carried out in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

44. As part of the discussions on remote sensing, the topic of satellite remote sensing should be taken up, particularly questions relating to data reception, distribution networks and the promotion of the practical applications of space technology, so that countries could place such technologies at the service of economic development. In that regard, the Philippines supported the proposal to establish a legal régime governing the access of States to the benefits of space activities, and supported the position of the Group of 77 that that question should

(Mr. Sanchez, Philippines)

be included on the Committee's agenda. It thus appealed to all delegations, particularly those of the developing countries, to support that proposal.

45. Mr. Freudenschuss (Austria) took the Chair.

46. Mr. FISSENKO (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the working papers of the Committee on Outer Space and its Sub-Committees showed that increasingly more States recognized the need to join their efforts in order to use space more rationally, so as to solve the economic and social problems still confronting mankind. The importance of broad international co-operation in various fields, particularly in space, had been strongly emphasized by Mr. Gorbachev in Moscow on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

47. Since the day, 30 years earlier, when the entire world had heard the signals from the first Soviet satellite, space science had made considerable progress. Research programmes had made it possible to achieve outstanding results in such fields as telecommunications, meteorology, world cartography, mineral exploration and oceanography, as well as in search and rescue operations for ships in distress.

48. The launch of more than 30 inter-planetary probes during the past 20 years had made it possible to increase knowledge of the planets and satellites. The success of numerous projects, such as Vega, the research work carried out by the Mir space station and on the unique orbital complex Soyuz-Mir-Kvant-Progress, as well as other work in which scores of countries, including the Byelorussian SSR, had participated, had once again illustrated the benefit to be derived from combining the scientific and technical potential of several States for the peaceful conquest of outer space. In that regard, it was regrettable that a pall was cast over the hopes of mankind by sinister plans aiming to turn outer space into a theatre for "star wars" and threatening to transform it into a source of mortal danger for all.

49. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had a role to play in that field and could, inter alia, help the Conference on Disarmament and the organizations specifically entrusted with that question. His country regretted that that Committee's work concerning the ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes was at a standstill. It also regretted that the Committee had not been able to reach agreement on the choice of a new item to be included on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee. That question should remain a priority matter, and it was necessary to consider, inter alia, the items proposed by the Group of 77, in order to reach consensus expeditiously.

50. In view of the growth of space technology, the Legal Sub-Committee should pay greater attention to matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space. The Soviet proposal provided a good basis in that regard. The Legal Sub-Committee should also continue its work on draft principles governing States' activities in the utilization of the geostationary orbit. The German Democratic Republic and several developing countries had made proposals on the basis of which a mutually acceptable solution might be found. The Byelorussian SSR was particularly interested in the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use

(Mr. Fissenko, Byelorussian SSR)

of nuclear power sources in outer space. In order to obtain tangible results in that field, it was essential to bear in mind the provisions of the Conventions of the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as the proposals made by States.

51. The Byelorussian SSR was also interested in the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and was in favour of reconstituting the Working Group of the Whole to evaluate their implementation. If, as his delegation wished, the recommendations were to be implemented more rigorously, the real needs of all States would also have to be evaluated.

52. The conquest of outer space offered numerous areas that lent themselves to peaceful international co-operation. Such efforts could take the form of the world space organization proposed by the USSR, which would operate on the principle of mutual benefit and would allow States to have access, on a non-discriminatory basis, to the results obtained through co-operation in the peaceful conquest of outer space. In that context, his delegation supported the proposal by Czechoslovakia concerning the activities of such an organization, whose aim would be to work towards the peaceful conquest of outer space and to monitor compliance with agreements prohibiting the extension of the arms race into outer space when such agreements were concluded. His delegation hoped that in 1987, which marked the twentieth anniversary of the first treaty on outer space, the consideration of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space would be fruitful and would reinforce and broaden international co-operation in that important area for humanity.

53. Mr. MITAU (Kenya) said that the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space should be addressed without delay and that a conventionally accepted boundary between the atmosphere and outer space should be established. The proposals already put forward and others that might be advanced at a later stage should be considered as a basis for the beginning of serious negotiations on that question.

54. It was necessary to establish a legal régime to govern the nature and utilization of the geostationary orbit. The current first-come, first-served arrangement tended to work in favour of the few countries which were technically capable of conducting space programmes. He hoped that serious consideration would be given to that question at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee.

55. He was optimistic that the arms race would not be extended into outer space and that the countries concerned would heed the pleas from the international community to explore outer space for peaceful purposes only. His Government fully supported the efforts of the Disarmament Commission and hoped that the already difficult work facing it would not be further complicated by an arms race in outer space.

56. His delegation hoped that, despite the many different views expressed, consensus would continue to prevail in COPUOS.

57. Mrs. GUARDIA (Venezuela) congratulated the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the progress it had made at its February session in implementing General Assembly resolution 41/64 by establishing a Working Group of the Whole to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. The Working Group had drafted a set of recommendations and fixed a number of priorities.

58. The work of the Legal Sub-Committee at its twenty-sixth session had not been very satisfactory. Owing to the inflexible position of certain delegations, questions relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space had not even been considered in informal consultations. It gave cause for concern that space law was the sole branch of law whose scope did not have defined limits. Although the delimitation of outer space posed a political and legal problem, it could be resolved by adopting a legal instrument with universal scope. Discussion on that point should be based on a more sound and more acceptable working paper.

59. It had also been impossible to reach an agreement during the consideration of the draft principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. It might even be justified to speak of a regression, because not only had there been no consensus on any of the three principles considered, but there had even been a re-evaluation of the agreement concerning the principles and assistance to States.

60. As the Legal Sub-Committee must consider the choice of a new item to be placed on its agenda, the Group of 77 had proposed consideration of the legal aspects related to the access of States to the benefits derived from the exploration and utilization of outer space. That proposal would enable the work of COPUOS to focus upon essential aspects requiring clarification and to strengthen the legal provisions on outer space activities within the framework of the Treaty. In that context, the Group of 77 pointed out that, under the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, international co-operation in the field of outer space was obligatory, which not only presupposed recognition of jus cogens but also constituted a starting point for developing a body of law that was as yet incomplete.

61. At its last session, COPUOS had recommended that a decision should be taken on that question at the forty-second session of the General Assembly. She hoped that, in taking up the proposal by the Group of 77, the Sub-Committee would give new impetus to its work and would create a legal framework to reinforce international co-operation and regulate the access of developing countries to the benefits derived from outer space activities. But once again, COPUOS would have to close the debate on the question by urging the Sub-Committee to take a decision at its next session. It was discouraging that certain delegations refused to co-operate on that point. Her delegation hoped that all delegations would show a genuine political readiness to reach a mutual understanding for the common good.

62. Mr. SVOBODA (Canada) said that, in 1987, his country was celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its placing in orbit of the scientific satellite Alouette 1, through which Canada had joined the USSR and the United States as the only countries utilizing outer space.

(Mr. Svoboda, Canada)

63. His delegation shared the feeling of disappointment voiced by a number of other delegations at the failure to maintain, in 1987, the progress made in 1986. But recent developments in the space sciences and the great projects envisaged for the turn of the century, such as exploring the Martian soil and carrying out long-term research on board inhabited space stations, plus the emergence of a political desire, led his delegation to believe that COPUOS would have an important contribution to make in the future.

64. Canada, which had not developed means to place vehicles in orbit, had been a consistent supporter of international co-operation in space matters, as witnessed in the record of current and anticipated achievements that would mark the next 25 years. His delegation referred, in particular, to such projects as the space station engineered by the United States, the OLYMPUS and ERS-1 projects of the European Space Agency, the launching of RADARSAT, an earth observation satellite, in co-operation with the United Kingdom and the United States, the setting up of the COSPAS-SARSAT search and rescue assistance system, which might soon be the subject of a treaty between France, the United States, the USSR and Canada, as well as the EXOS, D. UARS and INTERBOL projects.

65. Canada was placing increasing emphasis on space technology in the context of its international development aid programme, mainly in the management of resources and the environment, as the benefits of research and investment in remote sensing became more general.

66. The prevailing mood in COPUOS clashed with the optimism of the researchers, engineers, industrialists and users of space technology, owing perhaps in part to the way in which the work of that Committee was designed and organized. Canada was prepared to examine that issue; it had supported a proposal by the Netherlands delegation, in an informal paper on the restructuring of COPUOS circulated at the Committee's twenty-seventh session. In order that that question might be examined constructively, it should be the subject of a separate item on the agenda of COPUOS and assigned to a working group for consideration.

67. His delegation was opposed to the overly simple solution of reducing by a week the annual session of the Legal Sub-Committee, because a body which dealt with the development of international law required sufficient time to carry out informal consultations without which no real progress was possible.

68. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should continue emphasizing the scientific content of its work. The very valuable presentations made by the experts on the exploration of planets, the life sciences, the modification of the biosphere and the contribution of COSPAR and IAF to space research were, in that regard, worthy of note.

69. Referring to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, he hoped that the Working Group of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee dealing with that question would be able to meet during the next session of the Sub-Committee and that it would be possible, after the detailed discussions held during the last

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session of the Legal Sub-Committee, for the General Assembly to adopt a full set of principles on the use of nuclear power sources at its next session.

70. He noted with regret that none of the questions proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee seemed to meet two essential conditions, namely that they should be of practical interest and at the same time be likely to meet with general agreement. Among those proposals, the improvement of the procedure for registering space objects was the subject that was most worthy of consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee for the reasons outlined in document A/AC.105/L.169. If that proposal did not meet with general agreement, consideration might be given to other questions, such as space debris, which affected both the interests of the space Powers and the users of space services. If agreement was not reached on that question at the current session, it would be necessary to request the Legal Sub-Committee itself to resolve that vital question.

71. Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia) said that the launching of the first Sputnik 30 years earlier had marked the beginning of the conquest of outer space and an attempt had been made to regulate the exploration and exploitation of outer space 10 years later through the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. It was clear that international co-operation had not developed on the basis of a just and equitable sharing of the benefits and that the scientific and technical monopolies had profited from the loopholes and shortcomings of the Treaty. Under those conditions, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies had an essential role to play in order to ensure equitable access to all countries.

72. For that reason, Colombia firmly supported the proposal of the Group of 77 to include a new item which would bring the question of co-operation back to the foreground and enable the Legal Sub-Committee to elaborate systematically legal elements for clearly defining international co-operation, as had been suggested by the representative of Chile.

73. His delegation noted with satisfaction the work of the two Sub-Committees, particularly the establishment by the Legal Sub-Committee of a working group to consider agenda item 4. It was encouraging to note the points of agreement in the comparative study of the two draft principles on the geostationary orbit. The common elements in the equatorial document and the document submitted by the German Democratic Republic might make it possible to begin negotiations on the remaining principles and finally lay down the necessary regulations taking into account the needs of the developing countries and the legitimate rights of the equatorial countries.

74. Referring to the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, he said that Colombia had co-sponsored, with the United Nations, the first Latin American meeting aimed at identifying the real situation and needs in the area of space co-operation. The High-level Group of Experts had adopted more than 40 concrete recommendations.

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75. He stressed the pressing need to change the way in which COPUOS conducted negotiations and discussions so that due account might be taken of the aspirations of the developing countries. That would be the best way to revitalize the activities of that Committee and help it carry out its mandate.

76. Mr. MAYORSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to make a number of clarifications concerning a question raised in the statement by the representative of the United States. The latter, after referring to a recent symposium on outer space in Moscow in which a delegation of American experts had participated, had mentioned discrepancies between the declaration adopted at the end of the symposium and the publication of its results in the Soviet press. It was true that certain errors had slipped into the report which had appeared in the press. According to the information available to the representative of the Soviet Union, the reasons for that were essentially technical. There had been no bad intentions or desire to distort the results of the symposium. Furthermore, contrary to what the representative of the United States had said, the representative of the Soviet Union, in his statement to the Committee on the agenda item under consideration, had accurately quoted excerpts from the declaration of the symposium. In that connection, the representative of the Soviet Union once again read out, in English, the relevant passage of the declaration and said that he was keeping a copy of it for the representative of the United States.

77. Mr. HODGKINS (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation merely wished to state that the United States had been disappointed to note the discrepancies between the two texts of the declaration, the one which had been adopted by the participants and the one which had been published in the Soviet press. In doing so, his delegation had merely sought to get the facts set straight, and he was glad that the Soviet delegation had obliged. The delegation of the United States simply requested that those remarks should be included in the summary record of the meeting.

78. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 76.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.