



## General Assembly

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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL  
USES OF OUTER SPACE

Forty-first session  
3-12 June 1998

### DRAFT REPORT OF THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held its forty-first session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 3 to \_\_ June 1998. The officers of the Committee were as follows:

*Chairman:* U. R. Rao (India)

*Vice-Chairman:* Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile)

*Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur:\**

The verbatim unedited transcripts of the meetings of the Committee are contained in documents COPUOS/T.443 to 4\_\_.

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\*At its opening meeting, the Chairman informed the Committee that he had been notified that Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco) was unable to complete his three-year term of office as Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee.

*Meetings of subsidiary bodies*

2. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had held its thirty-fifth session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 9 to 20 February 1998 under the chairmanship of Dietrich Rex (Germany). The report of the Subcommittee was issued as document A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1.

3. The Legal Subcommittee had held its thirty-seventh session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 23 to 31 March 1998 under the chairmanship of Václav Mikulka (Czech Republic). The report of the Subcommittee was issued as document A/AC.105/698. The verbatim unedited transcripts of the meetings of the Subcommittee are contained in documents A/AC.105/C.2/1997/T.605 to 612.

*Adoption of the agenda*

4. At its opening meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda (including election of the Rapporteur).
2. Statement by the Chairman.
3. General exchange of views.
4. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.
5. Preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) by the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III.
6. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1).
7. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-seventh session (A/AC.105/698).
8. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.

9. Other matters.

10. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

*Membership and attendance*

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1721 E (XVI) of 20 December 1961, 3182 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, 32/196 B of 20 December 1977, 35/16 of 3 November 1980 and 49/33 of 9 December 1994 and decision 45/315 of 11 December 1990, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was composed of the following Member States: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia.

6. At its 443rd, 444th and 447th meetings, the Committee decided to invite, at their request, the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, Guatemala, the Holy See, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Thailand, Tunisia, together with the League of Arab States, to attend its forty-first session and to address it, as appropriate, on the understanding that it would be without prejudice to further requests of that nature and that it would not involve any decision of the Committee concerning status.

7. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was also represented at the session.

8. Representatives of the European Space Agency (ESA), the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), the International Law Association (ILA), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat), the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the International Space University (ISU) and the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) also attended the session.

9. A list of representatives attending the session is contained in document A/AC.105/XLI/INF/1.

*Proceedings*

*Bureau of the Committee*

10. The Committee, informed that Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco) was unable to complete his term of office as Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee, recalled that the agreement reached in 1997 on the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,<sup>1</sup> which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, provided that when any officer could not complete a term, the regional group holding the office concerned should nominate a candidate to be elected at the beginning of the session that immediately followed the termination of that officer's tenure.

11. The Committee noted that the African Group would need to nominate a candidate to replace Mouslim Kabbaj and that because of the short time between the notification and the beginning of the current session, the African Group had not had sufficient time to consult among its Members to bring forth a candidate. The Committee agreed to proceed with its work while including in its agenda the item "Election of the Rapporteur" and to take up that agenda item when the African Group had concluded its consultations.

*Statements*

12. At its 443rd to 445th meetings, the Committee held a general exchange of views, in the course of which statements were made by the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States), China, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

13. At the 443rd meeting, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat made a statement reviewing the work of the Office during the previous year and the documentation before the Committee.

14. Statements were also made by the representatives of ESA, IAA, ILA, Inmarsat and INTELSAT, as well as the Expert on Space Applications of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. The Committee also heard special presentations by the representative of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics on the space exhibition for UNISPACE III at its 448th meeting, on 8 June 1998; by the representative of the Russian Federation on

contamination of the space surrounding Earth by artificial and natural debris at its 449th meeting, on 9 June 1998; and by the representative of ISU on preparations for the youth forum at UNISPACE III at its 450th meeting, on 9 June 1998.

15. After considering the various items before it, the Committee, at its \_\_\_ meeting, on \_\_ June 1998, adopted its report to the General Assembly containing the recommendations and decisions set out below.

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS**

### **A. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes (agenda item 4)**

16. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, paragraph 32, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its consideration, as a matter of priority, of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, taking into account the views expressed at its fortieth session and at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

17. The Committee was of the view that the request of the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/56, to the Committee to continue to consider that item as a matter of priority and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session showed the concern felt by the international community and the need to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, taking into account the needs of developing countries. The Committee, through its work in the scientific, technical and legal fields, had an important role to play in ensuring that outer space was maintained for peaceful purposes. It was the firm belief of the members of the Committee that current efforts should be continued that would strengthen the role of the Committee in maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. The Committee had responsibilities relating to the strengthening of the international basis for the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space, which could cover, among other matters, further development of international space law, including, as appropriate, the preparation of international agreements governing various practical peaceful applications of space science and technology. Strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space also implied the need for the Committee itself to improve, whenever necessary, the methods and forms of its work.

18. Some delegations expressed the view that the Committee should contribute to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes by strengthening the scientific and technical content of its work and by promoting broader and deeper international and regional cooperation between all countries in outer space activities. One delegation was of

the view that some of those cooperative activities should pay particular attention to natural disaster management, the use of satellite technology for global search-and-rescue activities and medical and biological applications of space technology.

19. The view was expressed that the Committee had been created exclusively to address international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and that the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament were the competent multilateral bodies for dealing with disarmament. That delegation also expressed the view that agenda item 4 had produced measurable results in the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, namely, the establishment in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the addition of new items to the agenda of that Subcommittee, the impetus for finalizing the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, and the addition of the agenda item of the Committee concerning spin-off benefits of space exploration.

21. The view was expressed that the Committee should complement and contribute to the work being done in the Conference on Disarmament, considering that the peaceful uses of outer space and questions relating to the disarmament of outer space were overlapping.

22. The view was expressed that one of the ways to promote the peaceful uses of outer space was for more countries to participate in the exploration of outer space and to utilize the benefits derived from those activities, and that to attain that objective, creation of an indigenous capacity of Member States, especially in the developing countries, should be considered a priority.

#### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup>*Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, General Assembly, Official Records, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20), annex I.*