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## **THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

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Vienna  
19-30 July 1999

**Committee I**

Agenda item 9

**Benefits of basic space science and capacity-building**

### **Technical Forum**

#### **Conclusions and proposals of the Workshop on Observations of Near-Earth Objects**

1. The Workshop on Observations of Near-Earth Objects reviewed the problem of possible collisions of asteroids and comets with the Earth. It was stressed that the Earth, like all other solid bodies in the solar system, had been continuously bombarded by cosmic debris ranging in size from microscopic to up to several kilometres in diameter.
2. The chances of a major collision in the near future were extremely small, but the consequences would be so large as to require that the scientific and political communities made every effort possible to reduce major risks and to identify possible countermeasures for smaller ones.
3. The field of near-Earth object (NEO) research should be viewed not only as an exciting scientific discipline, but also as a service to humankind and a very good opportunity to encourage and promote international collaboration.
4. The International Astronomical Union had already promoted collaboration and coordination of activity, through the establishment of the Spaceguard Foundation. All countries in the world were invited to join those efforts, which did not require extremely sophisticated or expensive instrumentation.
5. The Workshop therefore recommended:
  - (a) That the United Nations promote education and information on NEOs, especially in developing countries;
  - (b) That the United Nations take the initiative of inviting all Member States to support NEO research in their own countries, through the establishment of national or regional "spaceguard" centres to be coordinated by the international Spaceguard Foundation;
  - (c) That every effort be made to provide financial support for NEO research, both theoretical and observational (from ground and space), and especially for the encouragement of exchanges and training of young astronomers in developing countries;
  - (d) That the United Nations support and promote greater involvement of scientists and observatories from nations in the southern hemisphere as an opportunity for cultural and scientific development.

6. The Workshop endorsed the following paragraphs of the draft report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) (A/CONF.184/3 and Corr.1 and 2): 212, 224 and paragraph (c) of section III of the draft Vienna declaration (see A/CONF.184/3/Corr.2).
  7. The Workshop welcomed the discussion and initiatives of the Space Generation Forum and encouraged participation in future NEO research.
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