



DEC 13 1982

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
25th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 9 November 1982  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUBAREZ (Yemen)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 62: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE  
(continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
- (b) REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
- (c) REPORT OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

AGENDA ITEM 63: PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 131: QUESTION OF THE REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY SPACE OBJECTS (continued)

\* This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room A-3550, 366 United Nations Plaza (Alcoa Building), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL  
A/SPC/37/SR.25  
12 November 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 62: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE  
(continued) (A/SPC/37/L.6 and L.7)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/37/20)
- (b) REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/37/46)
- (c) REPORT OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1, A/CONF.101/11)

AGENDA ITEM 63: PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/37/20; A/SPC/37/L.5)

AGENDA ITEM 131: QUESTION OF THE REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY SPACE OBJECTS (continued) (A/37/141; A/SPC/37/L.8)

1. Mr. PORTUGAL (Peru) said that all space activities should be oriented exclusively towards peaceful purposes. The benefits derived from the exploration and use of outer space should be shared equitably by all mankind on the basis of international co-operation. The technologically-advanced countries should help the developing countries to establish their own capabilities in the field of space science and technology. The training of qualified personnel, the surveying of resources and the environment, and space communications techniques were some of the areas of immediate interest.

2. The United Nations had a vital role to play in that regard through its specialized agencies, its information systems and the relevant arrangements and agreements which had been adopted under its auspices. The Organization was the political and legal framework for promoting international co-operation in the field of outer space in order to meet the needs of the developing countries. Such co-operation must be based on the principle of universality. All countries must have equal access to the information obtained through space technology. In that regard, the tendency to increase the cost of providing information obtained by satellites must be reversed. UNISPACE 82 had taken an important step in that direction by calling for the establishment of an international space information system under the control of the United Nations.

3. His delegation attached great importance to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The elaboration of draft principles governing, on the basis of mutual respect and equality, remote sensing of the earth by satellites, the delimitation of outer space and the supplementing of international law on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space were among its most urgent tasks. It was hoped that, through a spirit of co-operation on the part of its members, COPUOS would be able in the near future to reach agreement on those matters.

(Mr. Portugal, Peru)

4. The lack of progress over the years in the elaboration of a draft set of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting was regrettable. His delegation, therefore, supported draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.5. The principles set forth in the annex to that draft resolution reflected the aspects of that question which would have to be considered in a specific international agreement.
5. The fact that the conclusions and recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had been adopted on the basis of consensus was particularly significant. Developing countries should take particular note of the recommendation to stimulate horizontal co-operation in all spheres of the application of space science and technology. The concern of the international community at the extension of the arms race into outer space had been frequently expressed at the Conference. The intention of certain States to bring about new areas of confrontation jeopardizing the existence of mankind and impeding international co-operation was incomprehensible. Steps must be taken to supplement the international principles governing the activities of States in outer space, on the moon and other celestial bodies in order to promote the peaceful uses of outer space.
6. Mr. EDEY (Barbados) said that space science and technology were closely related to the question of information and communications, which had been discussed earlier under agenda item 67. It was gratifying to learn of the plans put forward for the utilization of the resources of outer space in a wide range of scientific fields. His delegation fully supported all such efforts which were geared to the promotion of peace and the well-being of mankind.
7. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the documents under consideration. The recommendations calling for the development of the infrastructure of space science and technology studies in the education system of developing countries was particularly important in view of the need to prepare young people to meet the future challenges in that field. Without co-operation and international assistance, however, the costs involved in that effort would put a considerable burden on developing countries.
8. Many countries would be unable to share in the benefits of space science and technology without the various forms of co-operation discussed at UNISPACE 82. In that regard, it was gratifying to learn that the United Nations was prepared to play an important role through the organization of seminars and training courses in that field for the benefit of developing countries. The Programme on Space Applications should be supported in order to promote co-operation between developed and developing countries in space science and technology, provide in-depth training for space technologists, create an indigenous technological base in developing countries, and provide technical advice on the application of space projects to the developing countries.
9. The use of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting was of particular interest to his country. Barbados, which was located close to the equator, stressed the need to plan and regulate the use of the geostationary orbit. Although his country did not want to deny any nation reasonable access to the geostationary orbit, it emphasized the need to avoid cluttering the orbit or the related radio frequency spectrum with what was known as "space garbage". In

/...

(Mr. Edey, Barbados)

that regard, his delegation would welcome further research and investigation into the possibilities of the use by satellites of an elliptical orbit to broaden the range of that resource. ITU and future Administrative Radio Conferences should give appropriate consideration to that question.

10. His delegation welcomed the potential of remote sensing of the earth in the detection and analysis of data for meteorology, oceanography and land survey. Remote sensing, however, should not be used for military purposes, and outer space, in general must be kept free from the arms race and related activities. States should be consulted before their territory was sensed and should have priority access to data on its territory obtained through remote sensing.

11. Direct television broadcasting by satellites should be carried out on the basis of the consent and agreement of the receiving States. An international legal instrument governing direct television broadcasting should ensure adequate safeguards to control the dissemination of information to individual States and should provide for consultative machinery to modify or prohibit broadcasts which States did not feel were in their interests. His delegation called for the establishment of a system for monitoring radio and television broadcasts before transmission so that small countries like his own would not have to assume the heavy financial burden which that task entailed. Barbados supported the setting up of an independent body under the control of the United Nations to monitor satellites, particularly since much of the data gathering or sensing activities were carried out by artificial satellites. Lastly, Barbados supported the proposals which would facilitate the transfer of increasing levels of space technology to the developing countries.

12. Mr. DJALAL (Indonesia) said that the applications of space science and technology could be powerful tools in promoting development for all mankind, particularly developing countries. UNISPACE 82 had recognized the imperative need for greater co-operation among developing countries and the need to guarantee access to space science and technology for the benefit of all countries.

13. All activities relating to the use of direct television broadcasting should be based on the principles of a full consultation and agreement between States. It was time to adopt principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. His delegation, therefore, supported draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.5 and called for energetic action by the United Nations to enable developing countries to achieve access to direct television broadcasting systems.

14. Many of the difficulties encountered in drafting a set of principles governing remote sensing of the earth were focused on the issues of prior consent and notification of the sensed State, data transfer to the sensed State and agreements on dissemination of data to third parties. His delegation felt that any agreement on those vital questions should be based on respect for the sovereign rights of States. Furthermore, remote sensing activities should meet the needs of developing countries with regard to their economic and social development. Steps must be taken to promote the development of regional and international co-operation, in view of the highly complex and costly processing of remote-sensing data. The United Nations had a vital role to play in that regard. It was gratifying to note

(Mr. Djalal, Indonesia)

that COPUOS viewed with satisfaction the readiness of his Government to host a regional world sensing centre under United Nations auspices to help the developing countries to establish their remote sensing programmes. Developing countries were particularly concerned at the unrestrained use of the geostationary orbit and the need for a general definition and/or delimitation of outer space, particularly with regard to the activities carried out in the geostationary orbit. His delegation stressed the need for a legal régime which would safeguard the interests of all countries, particularly the developing countries, and would take into account the rights and interests of the subjacent States. He shared the view that that matter should be discussed by a working group to be established during the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee.

15. As a developing country with its own communication satellites and a modest space programme, Indonesia had been pleased to host a United Nations regional seminar on remote sensing in 1981 and participate in the series of outer space exhibitions held at Headquarters in 1982. An effective co-operation programme must be established in the application of space technology with particular emphasis on extending the benefits of space technology to developing countries. In that regard, the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be expanded. Developing countries faced an immediate need in the training of personnel, the transfer of information and technology, and adequate financing of such activities. His delegation, therefore, supported the proposal to upgrade the Outer Space Affairs Division to a Centre for Outer Space and to set up an international space information service, in order to strengthen international co-operation and assistance to developing countries.

16. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's concern at the militarization of outer space. The international community must take further steps to keep outer space free of weapons and promote the mutually beneficial uses of outer space.

17. Mr. URBINA (Costa Rica) said that history had shown that technological development had brought about and reinforced new types of international domination which infringed on the sovereignty of less advanced States. History had also shown that technologically-advanced countries had always resisted any type of regulation which might reduce the profits which they obtained from their advantageous position. The exploration of outer space threatened to serve the interests of a few and reinforce existing patterns of domination by broadening the technological gap between developed and developing countries. The international community was concerned at that situation and sought to bring about a legal framework which would promote international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space and ensure general and equitable access to its benefits.

18. It was the task of the United Nations to promote the elaboration and observance of principles governing outer space activities, in view of the fact that outer space was the common heritage of mankind. It was unfortunate that since the signing of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, there had been a delay in the adoption of norms governing space activities. His delegation, therefore, urged the Legal Sub-Committee to expedite its work with a view to reaching agreement on the principles governing remote sensing of the earth, the questions relating to the geostationary orbit and direct television broadcasting by satellites. His delegation supported certain principles which had been set forth in that regard and whose adoption would benefit the developing countries. The multiple applications

/...

(Mr. Urbina, Costa Rica)

of remote sensing of the earth from space were particularly promising for the future in that connection. He stressed the need for the speedy adoption of a number of principles which would safeguard the interests and sovereignty of States without impeding development. All sensed States should have access to information obtained through remote sensing, and such information should not be transmitted to a third State without the consent of the sensed State. That principle was applicable regardless of whether remote sensing was carried out by a State or private interests and should be elaborated in a legal instrument.

19. Costa Rica attached particular importance to the regulation by the international community of access to and use of the geostationary orbit. The acceptance by the international community of a degree of planning with the participation of all Member States was encouraging. He expressed satisfaction at the work of the Legal Sub-Committee and urged it to increase its efforts in that regard. His delegation supported draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.5 on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. It was unfortunate that the working group set up for that purpose had been unable to submit an agreement for the consideration of the Committee.

20. Lastly, he expressed the profound concern of his delegation at the possible militarization of outer space. The presence of weapons in outer space on any type of installation for military purposes was cause for alarm and should be condemned by mankind as a whole. The United Nations must take steps to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and the regulation of space activities, in order to strengthen peace and promote the participation of all peoples in the benefits of progress.

21. Mr. YASH PAL (Secretary-General of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space) expressed regret that his task of preparing for and guiding UNISPACE 82 was now at an end. The many years of preparations for the Conference had been highly rewarding and also crucial to its success, helping it to adopt by consensus a report (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1) which appeared to enjoy universal approval.

22. With regard to the contents of that report and its implications for the future exploration and use of outer space, while it would appear that a large part of the agenda of UNISPACE 82 had been devoted to solving the problems of developing countries, he believed that no country could as yet claim to derive all the benefits that it could from space technology and science. Furthermore, because space science and technology were global in nature, bridging all gaps and transcending all boundaries between nations, developments in space could not be limited to a handful of countries. Such developments must be multilateral; the full potential of outer space would be realized only when it was realized equally for all countries.

23. Not only had many countries and experts participated in the Conference, but the latter had also generated interest and activities in participant countries themselves. He was still receiving reports from many countries about activities organized around the theme of the Conference, for instance, projects among school children, which had now been placed on a permanent footing. The Conference had thus increased knowledge of and interest in outer space developments and made the over-all picture of the problems and potential of space applications much clearer.

(Mr. Yash Pal)

24. The report of the Conference was set in a very broad context which reflected the grandeur of the space adventure. It also, however, tackled practical problems in depth. The Conference had, in fact, afforded the first opportunity to view space applications in their proper context, that of the more modest applications of space technology, rather than that of the impressive array of such technological gadgets as space probes and space shuttles. The report did not only offer practical solutions to technological problems but also raised a number of questions, directed at States first and foremost, and suggested a variety of studies that countries might undertake, if possible in co-operation with the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations.

25. From his personal contacts with all the countries which had participated in the Conference and his experience in his own country, one thing had become clear; there was no country on earth that did not have a nucleus of scientists who were perfectly capable of initiating space applications programmes. Instead of always calling upon outside experts for assistance, countries should work with their own scientists and expand such nuclei. Some countries had already used that approach successfully at national and even regional levels, thereby enhancing their self-reliance in the field of space applications. Having learnt at the Conference to appreciate the total dimensions of space, countries must realize what people, rather than machines, were capable of doing.

26. The report also suggested an agenda for future action by the specialized agencies. At an interagency follow-up meeting in September 1982, it had become clear that many agencies were already planning future activities on the basis of the report. The latter had thus served to consolidate the agencies' activities in the field of space applications, activities which he hoped the United Nations would continue to co-ordinate.

27. With regard to the future work of both the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations Secretariat, the Programme on Space Applications was to be expanded and would be responsible for implementing certain recommendations of the Conference and identifying and resolving problems in that area. It should be noted, in that connection, that the fellowship programme would be important but not catalytic in the follow-up to the Conference.

28. The Conference had not proposed the creation of new structures or the recruitment of additional staff nor called for massive funding. Instead, it had charted a course - but not destinations - for future action and had created a momentum. In order that that momentum and the understanding generated by the Conference might not be lost, countries, specialized agencies and the Secretariat must all take implementing action as soon as possible.

29. If man could distance himself somewhat from the details of space applications and demystify space, he could understand the relationship of the earth to the rest of the cosmos. That understanding raised fundamental and searching questions which objectified the new ecology of man's relationship with his fellow men and with the planet earth. Space technology was the fruit of man's ability to observe the earth from space. The concept of distance had thus been abolished, and the very idea of "neighbours" had been changed. The world should now be seen in context and no longer in terms of boundaries and distinctions among countries and races.

/...

(Mr. Yash Pal)

Countries must realize that man could not go on living in a stratified world. For the first time in his history, man had not only a new vision of the world but also the means to achieve it. His technical capabilities must be used in conjunction with that vision for, without the vision, there would simply be increasing militarization of outer space and growing mistrust and rivalry among nations. If that happened, the potential benefits of space would soon be lost. In his view, mankind had little more than five years left in which to reach agreement on changing the present world order; otherwise it would be too late.

30. A qualitatively different world could be achieved in which man's success would not be limited by national boundaries, in which knowledge would be universally accessible and information would be used to foster integration rather than domination. He sincerely hoped that the Conference had helped to bring such a world, a world governed by the new space ethic of kinship for all mankind, a little closer.

31. Mrs. NOWOTNY (Austria), introducing draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.6, L.7 and L.8 on behalf of the sponsors, announced that Belgium, Pakistan, Poland and the United Kingdom wished to co-sponsor draft resolutions A/SPC/37/L.6 and L.8, Australia wished to co-sponsor draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.8, and Bangladesh wished to co-sponsor draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.6.

32. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.6 was procedural in nature and self-explanatory, setting the agenda for the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees for 1983. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.7 endorsed the report of UNISPACE 82 and took up several issues of particular importance for international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space which required action by the General Assembly. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.8 reaffirmed the importance of the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects and urged all States that had not yet done so to consider as a matter of urgency ratifying or acceding to the Convention.

33. At the current session, negotiations on the various draft resolutions had been particularly arduous, and it was a tribute to her colleagues' spirit of compromise and goodwill that texts had been worked out which the Committee should be able to adopt by consensus.

34. Mr. ORTNER (Secretary of the Committee), referring to the financial implications of the draft resolutions, reported that the first part of operative paragraph 8 of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.6, which endorsed the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1983, had no financial implications. The second part of that paragraph, which endorsed the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, would be dealt with in conjunction with the financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.7. Draft resolution A/SPC/37/L.8 had no financial implications.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.