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Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 29 October 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zackheos . . . . . (Cyprus)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/54/20; A/C.4/54/8; A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7; A/CONF.184/6)

1. **Mr. Al-Anbuge** (Iraq) said that outer space was the common property of humankind and, for that reason, outer space activities must be governed by the principles of protection of the space environment, prohibition of the arms race and compliance with the relevant international legal instruments guaranteeing the use of space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

2. His delegation welcomed the convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which had taken place in Vienna in July 1999, and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development. The voluminous documentation on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space that had been submitted to the Conference established the basis for the use of space for the purpose of environmental protection; the rational utilization of natural resources; the promotion of development; education; and the broader application of space technology in the interests of developing countries. His delegation supported the proposal in the Vienna Declaration for the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations trust fund and the recommendation that after a period of five years the General Assembly should review the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

3. The international community was making concerted efforts to coordinate outer space activities with the assistance of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). He was concerned, however, at the efforts of the United States towards the militarization of space, as demonstrated by the NASA document "20/20 Vision", which referred to the prospect of bringing space under United States control and of putting into space laser anti-missile defence weapons. The execution of such a plan would mean violating 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 stated that the use and exploration of outer space must be carried out for the benefit of all mankind and exclusively for peaceful purposes.

4. Iraq had given humankind one of the most ancient civilizations and had been one of the founders of the United Nations, as well as of many of its organizations and scientific committees. Iraq had played a prominent and effective role in the work of COPUOS. It had begun to implement a large-scale programme on the peaceful uses of space technology, particularly in the fields of remote sensing and all types of communications. However, the sanctions imposed against Iraq on 6 August 1990, which had still to be lifted, had caused enormous losses and had hindered the effective implementation of that programme. They were also preventing Iraqi scholars and specialists in engineering and technology from following the development of space technology and space science, attending specialized international seminars and conferences or undertaking in-depth academic study, and receiving publications, periodicals and essential materials and equipment. Those sanctions were a systematic campaign aimed at depriving an entire people of the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of science, which completely contradicted the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations and all its principles, including the principle enshrined in the preamble to the Charter of employing international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The lifting of the sanctions was not only the moral, ethical and legal duty of the international community, which must save the Iraqi people from isolation and hunger, but would also allow the country's scientific potential to be realized and would enable Iraqi scholars to participate along with their colleagues throughout the world in building a better world for the whole of humankind.

5. **Mr. Kára** (Czech Republic) said that the Czech Republic had a long tradition of outer space activities, in particular astronomy, geophysics and other space-related fields. Major achievements included the launching of a series of microsatellites, MAGION 1-5, the last of which had been sent into orbit in 1996. Currently, a new satellite was under construction. The Czech Republic was participating in the European Space Agency's INTEGRAL Project and in the building of a new hard x-ray spectrometer together with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In recent years, the application of remote sensing had expanded to include monitoring and assessment of natural disasters. The conclusion of the Agreement on Cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) had contributed to closer cooperation between the Czech Republic and other European countries. Currently, the Czech Republic was in the process of joining the ESA PRODEX Programme.

6. UNISPACE III, which had taken place in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999, and the exhibition of space

science and technology organized in parallel with that event, had given the participants an opportunity to evaluate the current state of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space and to consider ways and means of further developing the respective programmes and strategies with which humankind would enter the twenty-first century. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Conference, which took into account the recommendations of the regional conferences and the Technical Forum, to which his country fully subscribed, was of the utmost importance.

7. As for the future work of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, particular attention should be devoted to stepping up accessions to the space treaties adopted under United Nations auspices. He therefore welcomed the current review of the status of the existing international legal instruments that was being conducted by the Legal Subcommittee and could not only encourage the acceptance of those treaties by additional States and international organizations, but also lead to the identification of new problems and the convening of negotiations on new agreements.

8. One of the major problems, which had become particularly acute in recent years, was the sharp increase in the number of objects in space that had ceased to fulfil their useful function and posed a certain threat to active satellites, services provided from space, and to the lives and safety of astronauts. He was referring to space debris, which currently constituted more than 90 per cent of all traceable objects. That issue was not dealt with in United Nations space treaties, which did not even specify whether space debris should enjoy legal protection, or, in other words, whether space debris should be considered as valuable property of the launching State. He therefore appreciated the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the problem of space debris and, in particular, the technical report, which constituted a sound basis for future work by COPUOS in that area.

9. **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) said that Tunisia attached great importance to the work of COPUOS. The third Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been an historic event. Representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions in the field of outer space participating in the conference had had an opportunity to exchange views and make constructive proposals on ways and means to strengthen the regime for the peaceful uses of outer space, develop international cooperation and increase the potential of States, especially developing countries, to use scientific achievements to promote the development process. The Vienna Declaration stressed the important role of space science in solving the problems of sustainable development and underlined the significance of expanded international cooperation in space exploration. His delegation welcomed the outcome of that important Conference and believed that its practical implementation would have key significance.

10. Science and technology played a central role in the development process. Ever since its independence, Tunisia had attached enormous significance to the human dimension, which was one of the main focuses of development activities. Education, science and technology were priority areas that would enable a qualitatively new level to be reached in solving important problems. In that connection, Tunisia was taking steps to strengthen national capacity in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space based on a wide-ranging plan to establish a scientific and technical basis for the use of space science and technology for the good of society. Therefore, governmental organizations and relevant institutes should strive to introduce new technologies and projects in different spheres, for instance monitoring of natural resources, forestry and agriculture, marine resources, desertification, water usage and biological research, ecological monitoring of the state of land and marine environment and telecommunications. A national network had been established in Tunisia for the collection and exchange of data to be used for monitoring of natural resources agricultural work. Several scientific research groups had also been established for the use of digital imaging, in addition to the National Outer Space Commission and the National Remote Sensing Centre.

11. Tunisia considered it necessary to provide equal access to outer space for all nations and peoples with a view to its peaceful use for the good of all humanity. At the same time, there was a gap between developing and developed countries in the area of space technology. The latter were not in a position to utilize the achievements of space science and technology to promote their social, economic and cultural development. Thus, international cooperation for the purpose of strengthening the capacity of developing countries in the area of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space was very important. Towards that goal, the exchange of information and experience must be improved through seminars, workshops and conferences. Tunisia was interested in the implementation of the project to establish an information network linking scientists, educators, professionals and decision makers in Africa. The international community, through international cooperation and application of the principles

of solidarity, could ensure the utilization of scientific resources in the interests of humanity and lay the foundations for sustainable development and universal prosperity.

12. **Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) said that the Mexican delegation fully endorsed the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration, especially those concerning the need to prevent an arms race in outer space. Mexico attached great importance to the preservation of outer space without any types of weapons and offensive and defensive systems. Space technology should be used in the interests of all countries. In that connection, it was necessary to promote the exchange of technological resources, which would allow the world to benefit from space exploration. Despite the successes achieved in the area of international cooperation, there was still a serious imbalance in the utilization of the advantages of technology related to space exploration. The gap which still separated developed and developing countries must be closed.

13. The United Nations played an important role in encouraging the development of international space law by elaborating general principles and conclusions with the binding force of legal instruments. The strengthening of the regime for the use of outer space in various conditions established legal limits and guaranteed the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes in the interests of all States. Mexico supported all efforts for the codification of international law with the objective of regulating space activities and utilization of space resources. At the initiative of Mexico, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had included on the agenda of its Legal Subcommittee the question of the review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space. That initiative had been intended to ensure the universality of space law by promoting greater adherence by States to the existing international agreements and conventions.

14. Since 1985, Mexico had launched five satellites into space, which were carrying out a wide range of activities for peaceful purposes in such areas as telecommunications, medicine, meteorology, prevention of natural disasters and mitigation of their consequences, and also providing mobile services to support institutions dealing with matters of national security.

15. As for the legal regime regulating access to the geostationary orbit, Mexico continued to believe that the norms to be elaborated should guarantee equal access by all States, especially developing ones, to that limited resource.

16. **Mr. Apunte** (Ecuador) said that the evolution of space exploration was evidence of the importance which should be attached to the appropriate utilization of outer space. The benefits of space exploration should not be available only to those countries which possessed advanced technology; international cooperation in that area was required, first of all to meet the requirements of developing countries, since the appropriate use of outer space could open broad possibilities for ensuring the sustainable economic development of all countries.

17. Implementation of the strategy adopted at UNISPACE III would permit rapid progress in the rational use of natural resources and would facilitate economic and social development for future generations. He especially emphasized the assistance that could be provided through the use of space technology, especially remote sensing and prevention of natural disasters and mitigation of their consequences. In 1998 Ecuador had become one of the main victims of the El Niño phenomenon, an area where space science could have played a very important role. In that connection, Ecuador planned to establish an international centre for the study of that natural phenomenon, for which it required support from the international community. The ground receiving station at Cotopaxi, Ecuador, and the Centre for Integrated Surveying of Natural Resources (CLIRSEN) implemented such activities for the 25 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Basin lying within its range. The Centre regularly organized educational courses and seminars for national and foreign specialists in various areas of space research. The efforts made within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications were of the greatest significance. Ecuador highly valued the seminars and informational courses organized in that area, which were a valuable instrument for the exchange of information and professional training for specialists.

18. Ecuador underlined the need for the establishment of a legal regime regulating equal access to the geostationary orbit, as it was a limited natural resource. Therefore, the question of its use should be decided taking into account the right of access of all States, with special attention being paid to developing countries.

19. **Mr. Lamdan** (Israel) said that on the threshold of the new millennium, Israel was endeavouring to take an active part in the exploitation and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. His country, which was following the work of COPUOS with interest, had played an active role in the UNISPACE III Conference in Vienna and had welcomed the Declaration it had adopted. The report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/54/20)

provided a reliable basis for further consideration of problems related to the exploitation of space.

20. The Israel Space Agency had been established as early as 1983. It had been assigned the task of promoting various space-related activities in Israel, including the building of an infrastructure geared towards achieving optimal economic and commercial results by making use of the country's technological advances in selected niches, notably in the use of small satellites and remote sensing. In 1988 Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of the first OFEQ satellite. In 1996, the Israeli AMOS geostationary satellite had been successfully launched on a European Ariane-4 launcher. It had subsequently served to extend international cooperation with a view to the establishment of the EROS (Earth Remote Observation System) satellite system. The first of eight EROS satellites was scheduled for launch at the end of 2000.

21. In the sphere of remote sensing, Israeli organizations had developed a number of applications, including: automatic generation of digital elevation models; mapping of geology, geomorphology and associated seismic activities; remote sensing of vegetation cover to assess soil and land-use effectiveness, for example for soil salination forecasting; measurement of soil moisture by synthetic aperture radar in the Negev desert region; the establishment of a national database for digital satellite images; and the establishment of a Global Positioning System (GPS) infrastructure in Israel.

22. Israel was also carrying out a number of collaborative projects, including the launching of a microsatellite in cooperation with Ukraine; placing the TAUVEX telescope into orbit in cooperation with the Russian Federation; joint experiments carried out with the use of a Netherlands satellite; funding, together with the French space agency and NASA, of the development of an electrical thruster and of a small laboratory to test survivability of components and subsystems in environmentally hostile space conditions; a feasibility study conducted jointly with a German company on the development of the "David" small commercial remote-sensing satellite; and the preparation, with Mediterranean countries, of a Mediterranean/Israeli Dust Experiment (MEIDEX), to be carried on a NASA launch vehicle.

23. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said that, although in the previous half century scientists and researchers had discovered some of the benefits of the exploitation of outer space, the horizon of knowledge about the hidden wealth of space was expected to broaden enormously in the next century. UNISPACE III had been an historic event which had made it possible to take stock of the cooperation among Member States in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The successful organization of the Conference reflected the participants' determination to promote better understanding and cooperation in such an important sphere under the auspices of the United Nations. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Conference laid emphasis on promoting effective means of using space technology to assist in the solution of problems of regional or global significance. As the nucleus of a strategy to address problems in the new millennium, the Declaration identified such measures as protecting the Earth's environment and managing its resources; using space technology for human security, development and welfare; advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment; enhancing education and training opportunities and ensuring public awareness; strengthening and repositioning space activities in the United Nations system; and promoting international cooperation.

24. To ensure the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration, a number of landmark decisions had been taken, including the establishment of a special voluntary fund; the evaluation in 2004 by the General Assembly of the implementation of the recommendations; strengthening of the Committee's ability to take follow-up actions, including expanded activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications; and annual observance of a world space week, so as to assess the contributions of space science and technology towards the betterment of the human condition. He noted that in the past year, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had made a substantial contribution with regard to the development of the concept of the measurement of space debris, the modelling of the space debris environment and the assessment of related risks, and the development of mitigation measures. Similarly, the Legal Sub-Committee had achieved progress towards reviewing the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space. Efforts must continue to formulate an acceptable definition and delimitation of outer space and of the nature and use of the geostationary orbit.

25. Space technology produced significant benefits in many fields, and they must be accessible to all Member States, including the developing countries. In past years, Pakistan had achieved considerable progress in the development of space science and technology, including the design, assembly/fabrication and launching of sounding rockets for upper-atmospheric research, light-weight satellites in low Earth orbit, and geosynchronous

communications satellites; the application of satellite remote sensing data and Geographic Information System technology for the surveying of natural resources; the development of satellite tracking, telemetry and telecommand facilities; and the establishment and operation of ground receiving stations for data acquisition from various satellites.

26. Pakistan remained concerned that outer space was under the threat of being transformed into yet another arena of military competition. Attempts to militarize space by pursuing narrow interests aimed at achieving global domination could lead to a new turn in strategic confrontation among the major Powers. It would thus be necessary to conclude a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space. Meanwhile, faithful implementation of the existing agreements on the peaceful uses of space science and technology should be sincerely promoted.

27. **Mr. Semenenko** (Ukraine) said that one of the positive current trends was that an increasing number of countries, including developing countries, were using space science and technology on a broader scale to improve the standard of living of their people. In that respect, the role of international organizations, and especially that of COPUOS, which enjoyed Ukraine's firm support, could hardly be overestimated. His delegation also welcomed the Vienna Declaration adopted at the UNISPACE III Conference, which was an important contribution to the development of international cooperation in the conquest of space. He drew attention to the proposal put forward at the Conference by his delegation for a "Space Patrol" global warning system project, and invited all Member States to take part in the implementation of that project.

28. The Government of Ukraine gave high priority to the development of the national aerospace industries. Ukraine currently had a highly developed industrial, scientific and engineering infrastructure for space research, with such renowned institutions as the Pivdenmashzavod Production Association in Dnepropetrovsk, the Institute for Space Research and the Paton Electric Welding Institute in Kiev and the Long Range Space Communications Centre in Evpatoria. The country's policy as far as the peaceful uses of space were concerned was aimed at preserving and strengthening the scientific schools and scientific and engineering capabilities of the aerospace industry. Special attention was also paid to the vocational training of a new generation of designers of space systems and researchers in the leading educational centres of Kiev, Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk.

29. Ukraine had some unique and significant achievements to its credits in different spheres of space science and technology which could be used in international space activities. Those areas included decametric radio astromony; the study of comets and meteorites and star formation processes; the influence of microgravity on cell metabolism and living organisms; research into microgravitational physics; aerospace environmental monitoring; and space transport systems. The participation of Ukraine in a number of joint international space projects in recent years demonstrated that the country had the necessary elements to promote such cooperation on a broader scale. The conversion of military facilities was continuing, and SS-18 missiles which were to have been eliminated under the provisions of the START Treaty were being used to produce Zenith boosters capable of launching twice as much payload at a lower cost.

30. **Mr. Maulion** (Philippines) said that the achievements of the earlier UNISPACE conferences, such as the creation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the establishment of the regional centres for space science and technology, were insufficient for developing the technology and meeting the needs of those who would benefit most from such technology. The task was to ensure that the services of the United Nations system and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space were used for the good of all humanity.

31. The Philippines hoped that Member States would respond to the call to support the special United Nations voluntary fund for implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. In view of the increasing commercialization of outer space, financing at the international level and from the private sector should also offer appropriate possibilities.

32. The Philippines was in favour of expanding cooperation in meteorological satellite applications for the enhancement of weather and climate forecasting. The same applied to the establishment of an integrated global system for natural disaster mitigation and relief and prevention. The current activities in space science and technology applications in the Philippines were a direct result of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (RESAP). But much remained to be done by way of making full use of the existing mechanisms of regional and international cooperation. The Philippines therefore fully supported the recommendation of the Kuala Lumpur regional preparatory conference for Asia and the Pacific that the coordination

between the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and RESAP should be further strengthened.

33. **Mr. Tasovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that his delegation acknowledged the important work done by COPUOS, with whose assistance the international community had coordinated United Nations policies for the peaceful exploration of outer space for nearly four decades. In 1999 COPUOS had successfully organized and conducted UNISPACE III, where the very important Vienna Declaration had been adopted.

34. His delegation subscribed to the statement made at an earlier meeting by the representative of Finland on behalf of the countries members of the European Union and associated countries and it wished to draw attention to some of Macedonia's basic policies for the development of outer space activities. It was important actively to pursue international space cooperation, to strive to apply the results of space developments in all parts of society, to try adequately to address the issue of space debris and to preserve the environment in space, and to support the establishment of a network of space science and technology education and research institutions in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. It hoped that the goals of the Vienna Declaration relating to the further improvement of international cooperation would be achieved.

35. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation categorically rejected the proposition voiced by Iraq that the United States was in some way violating or about to violate its international obligations under bilateral or multilateral agreements. The United States carried out its space programme in full accordance with the space treaties and the Charter of the United Nations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

Draft resolutions A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7

36. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should make an exception to rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and take decisions on the two draft resolutions, although they had only just been circulated at the meeting.

37. *It was so decided.*

38. **Mr. Rao** (India), speaking on behalf of the Working Group of the Whole on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, introduced the two draft resolutions and said that draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.6 was basically the same as the previous year's resolution on the item but contained a few changes. The preamble included two additional paragraphs on the successful holding of UNISPACE III and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration. Operative paragraphs 4 to 7, 15 and 16 reflected the agreement reached by the Committee in 1999 concerning a new approach to composing the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. Issues relating to space debris and decisions concerning the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee were dealt with in paragraphs 12 to 14 and 20. Recent developments affecting the regional centres for space science and technology education were reflected in paragraphs 22 and 23. After a lengthy debate the Committee had decided to include paragraph 28, concerning the interest of some developing countries in becoming members of the Committee. There was a minor typographical error in paragraph 28 of the French text, and the agreement reached by the Committee on the dates of its next session in 2000 had been inaccurately recorded in the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session, which was mentioned in paragraph 1. Subject to those comments the text of the draft resolution had been approved by the members of the Working Group by consensus.

39. Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.7 was devoted to the results of UNISPACE III and was similar in format to previous resolutions on the results of other United Nations conferences. Operative paragraphs 1 to 10 and 16 reflected decisions relating to the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as well as dealing with the conclusions contained in the Vienna Declaration. Some of the paragraphs contained typographical errors which would have to be corrected. For example, in the Arabic version of paragraph 9 "voluntarily" should be inserted after "to contribute". And in paragraph 10 the words "special voluntary fund" should be replaced by "Trust Fund". Paragraph 11 dealt with the measures which the Office for Outer Space Affairs would have to take to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In paragraphs 12 and 15 the Secretary-General was requested to ensure the widespread dissemination of the results of UNISPACE III and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the Conference's recommendations. Subject to those comments draft resolution L.7 had also been approved by the members of the Working Group by consensus. He suggested that in accordance with the established practice the two draft resolutions should be adopted without a vote.

40. **The Chairman** said that he understood that it was being suggested that he should write a letter to the Secretariat correcting the dates of the next session of the Committee to bring them into line with the original agreement. If there was no objection, he would proceed accordingly.

41. *It was so decided*.

42. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to make general comments before proceeding to take decisions on the draft resolutions.

43. **Mr. Cassapoglu** (Greece) and **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) drew attention to typographical errors in the French text of the draft resolutions.

44. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would note the corrections and he suggested that, if there was no objection, draft resolutions A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7, as orally amended, should be adopted without a vote.

45. *Draft resolutions A/C.5/54/L.6 and L.7 were adopted without a vote*.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.