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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

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Agenda item 5

**United Nations Programme on Space Applications
following the Third United Nations Conference on the
Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
(UNISPACE III)**

Mechanisms for and means of implementing the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), particularly the actions called for in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development

Working paper submitted by Canada

I. Statement of the situation

1. The Working Group of the Whole recalled that the overall goal of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was to use space technology to bring space benefits to humanity (i.e. to contribute to the solution of problems of global and regional significance) and that that goal was expressed in the nucleus of a strategy to address global challenges as contained in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development. The Working Group also recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, had decided to review, at its fifty-ninth session, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III.

II. Background to a proposal

2. In order to implement the ambitious actions outlined in the Vienna Declaration, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space needs a coherent

and effective strategy. Without such a strategy, the report of the Committee on the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III for review by the General Assembly in 2004 would reflect limited progress. It is therefore necessary to identify a mechanism and the means for the Committee to make meaningful progress towards achieving the overall goal of UNISPACE III. A way to proceed would be to pose the following questions:

1. What are the objectives?

There is a common desire to use space technology for human development and to implement as many of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration as possible before 2004. The Vienna Declaration contains 33 very diverse actions to be implemented.

2. What mechanisms and means are currently available to meet those objectives?

(a) To function within the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees as is currently the practice by adding agenda items responding to specific areas of interest or specific Vienna Declaration action items (such as was successfully done for the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the period 2001-2003, concerning items relating to strengthening the use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and to the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system);

Problem/obstacle/limitation: Under the current working methods of the Committee and its subcommittees, their agendas will not expand rapidly enough to accommodate the full range of action items in the Vienna Declaration.

(b) To request the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat to be the implementing body;

Problem/obstacle/limitation: Despite its outstanding work, the Secretariat is too small, understaffed and under-funded to implement more than a few of the action items on its own.

(c) To hand over implementation of the majority of the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration to non-governmental entities.

Problem/obstacle/limitation: This would remove control and responsibility from Member States and negate the coordination and consultation roles of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and it would not result in a coherent approach, engaging governmental and non-governmental entities.

3. What can be done to overcome those obstacles/limitations/problems?

To recognize that the above-mentioned options have limitations and find a balanced combination of the three mechanisms. That balance should preserve the role of Governments (i.e. through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space), be flexible to maximize the role of non-governmental entities and optimize the role of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. The way forward should make it possible to bring other resources and institutional actors. Overall, it should take advantage of the universality of the United Nations and use that recognition to bring support to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration.

4. What scheme would respond to those requirements and overcome the problems/limitations/obstacles?

Create a process for using the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to implement the Vienna Declaration through the adoption of a voluntary leadership mechanism of individual Member States and their appropriate governmental institutions on particular action items that is open to all and agreed to by the consensus of the Committee. The leaders for different activities would make their considerations open to participation by all interested parties, would report to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and would seek the broadest possible participation of other States and civil society and non-governmental entities. This way of working should be result-oriented, pragmatic, transparent to all, based on consensus and always subject to the overall coordination of the Committee.

Under this scheme, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee would use its Working Group of the Whole as an informal UNISPACE III working group, which would serve as the focal point for coordinating the efforts of Member States and the Secretariat in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration. The Working Group of the Whole would facilitate the active participation of Member States in the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations and necessary action items.

As agreed by consensus in the Subcommittee, interested States would take the lead on addressing and proposing specific implementation activities for individual Vienna Declaration action items. Those States (which would participate through relevant and appropriate governmental institutions, such as their space agencies) would form a dedicated team involving all other States with an interest in that action item and would coordinate the involvement and participation of interested non-governmental entities. That involvement would bring the resources of highly relevant non-governmental entities, such as the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), into the implementation process.

The teams would operate by consensus and report back each year to the Subcommittee's Working Group of the Whole. To remain endorsed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, all actions would require the Subcommittee's, and ultimately the Committee's, consensus-based agreement for implementation. In order to achieve as much progress as possible and to encourage maximum participation, teams would meet as often as necessary to implement their action item (both during the sessions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and throughout the year, as required) and would be encouraged to use electronic channels of communication as much as possible. States would be encouraged to participate in as many teams as they could productively and proactively support.

The overall effort would be managed in the Subcommittee through assessment/prioritization and implementation phases and would be monitored through a reporting schedule. In the assessment and prioritization phase, the Subcommittee would determine which actions (where, when and how) would be required, seeking the voluntary leadership and participation of States. In the implementation phase, the Subcommittee and the Secretariat would work with individual Member States to implement specific action items in a coherent and

timely manner. The progress of all efforts would be reviewed and monitored through a Secretariat-led reporting schedule and process.

As part of the assessment and prioritization phase, the Subcommittee may wish to create expert groups to carry out research and analysis and to propose recommendations with regard to a particular action item, such as, for example, the establishment of a global disaster management system. Each expert group would be open to the participation of all States interested in that particular item and should be balanced in terms of its geographical distribution and level of technological development. Each expert group would elect a Chairman, who would be approved by the Subcommittee, and would welcome the participation of relevant non-governmental organizations and institutions, depending on the requirements of the action item. The participation of non-governmental entities would be agreed to by members of the expert group.
