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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
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Agenda item 10
Space debris

Proposal of a work plan for the item entitled “Space debris” on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Working paper submitted by Canada, China, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America

1. Member States of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space share a common interest in limiting the production of space debris. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee has addressed the topic of space debris over many years and has compiled useful technical information on the debris environment, debris modelling and debris mitigation in its Technical Report on Space Debris.¹ The member States making the present proposal are suggesting a work plan with the goal of expediting international adoption of voluntary debris mitigation measures. In addition to this plan to address debris mitigation measures, it is envisaged that member States and international organizations would continue to report on research and other relevant aspects of space debris.

Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

2. The activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee would be as follows:

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.99.I.17.

2001 The Subcommittee reviews the draft work plan and encourages the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) to place due priority on its action to harmonize debris mitigation practices in order to increase prospects for completing the task.

The Subcommittee agrees upon a special topic to be focused on by the Subcommittee at its thirty-ninth session, in 2002.

2002 The Subcommittee invites IADC to present its results to the Subcommittee at its fortieth session, in 2003.

The Subcommittee discusses the special topic at its thirty-ninth session.

2003 IADC presents (to the Subcommittee) its proposed debris mitigation standards, based on consensus among the IADC members.

Member States review the debris mitigation standards and discuss the means of endorsing the utilization of those standards.

2004 IADC continues its presentation on its proposed debris mitigation standards (as required), based on consensus among its members.

Member States continue to review the debris mitigation standards.

The Subcommittee may wish to endorse the utilization of debris mitigation standards as guidelines to be implemented through national mechanisms.²

2005 Member States begin annual reporting of national activities to implement the debris mitigation standards.

Activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

3. Following the endorsement of the debris mitigation standards by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in adopting the report on its forty-seventh session, in 2004,² should consider its own endorsement of the use of those standards.

² This is a notional schedule. The timing of the endorsement is dependent upon how much time member States require to review and approve the proposed standards.