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Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 21 October 2003, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Loedel . . . . . (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 82: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/58/20, A/58/174, A/C.4/58/L.7 and A/C.4/58/L.8)

1. **Mr. Adamou** (Niger) noted the growing importance of peace, development and multilateralism at a time of increasing complexity and uncertainty, and unprecedented threats to security. His delegation hoped that, at the current session, Member States would reach broad agreement on peace and development issues, forming a basis for further efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

2. It was in the interest of all countries to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and to halt the militarization of space and the arms race. His delegation therefore encouraged the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to strengthen the mechanisms for coordinating its work with that of other bodies, such as the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to accelerating the negotiation of appropriate legal instruments to that end. Such cooperation would enable developed and developing countries to exchange information on recent achievements in the peaceful uses and non-militarization of outer space, which belonged to all humankind.

3. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) expressed his delegation's sympathy with the United States in connection with the Columbia space shuttle disaster. His delegation also commended the Russian Federation for bringing back a number of United States astronauts from the international space station on board a Russian spacecraft and congratulated China on recently becoming the third country to join the elite club of space-faring nations.

4. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and the five international treaties of the United Nations governing outer space activities. Outer space should be used for the benefit of all mankind without any limitation implied by the imposition of sovereignty over it; the exploration of space, access to its planets and the right to conduct scientific research should be available to all on the basis of equality.

5. States should restrict their use of outer space exclusively to peaceful purposes; they should not establish bases or non-civilian installations in outer space and should not conduct military tests or experiments in space or deploy weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction. Negotiations must be held leading to the adoption of an international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. There were numerous spin-off benefits from space technology in such areas as agriculture, medical research and transportation safety; there were also benefits in the form of improved communications through the Internet.

6. Another important issue was the definition and delimitation of space, which had been exhaustively discussed but had not been finally settled, despite an agreement on the legal regime applicable to outer space. That was now a matter of urgency in order to enable States to find a legal basis for regulating the limits of sovereignty and resolving issues that might arise from collisions between objects in space.

7. In conclusion, he said that his delegation supported the candidature of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for full membership of COPUOS.

8. **Mr. Zhanibekov** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan was participating in a number of international projects related to the use of space science and technology for the protection of the environment. His country had also signed agreements with the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus to join together in using the Baikonur cosmodrome for peaceful purposes. Kazakh scientists were working with sources of ionizing radiation associated with the preparation and launching of spacecraft from Baikonur with the objective of preventing damage to the environment resulting from the use of space technology. Since 1991, Kazakhstan had participated in manned space programmes of the Russian Federation. Kazakhstan's space institutions were also interested in developing cooperation with the United States of America under the agreement between Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the United States on technological guarantees relating to the launch of the Inmarsat-3 artificial earth satellite.

9. Preservation of the environment must become one of the most important areas of international

cooperation, with wide application of the latest achievements of space science and technology. Some of the most pressing global problems were the shortage of drinking water and the progressive degradation of the soil, as well as increasing economic damage resulting from natural and man-made disasters. For Kazakhstan, which had had to cope in practical terms with the global environmental disaster of the Aral Sea, the use of space science and technology for environmental monitoring and preservation was of enormous significance.

10. Kazakhstan placed great value on the contribution made by COPUOS in promoting international space activity and the development of space law, and believed that it should retain its leading role in further strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

11. **Ms. Baaziz** (Algeria) welcomed the efforts of COPUOS to follow up the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. Outer space was the province of all humankind and must remain an area of peace and cooperation among States. Algeria fully endorsed the strategy to promote the use of outer space for the development and well-being of all peoples, particularly the developing countries. Such a strategy must increase the access of developing countries to space technologies and techniques, gradually narrowing the enormous gap between rich and poor countries in that field.

12. Algeria attached great importance to space technologies, as illustrated by its activities in remote sensing and cartography, and its application of satellite data to agriculture, water resources, natural disaster prevention and management, environmental protection, land development and meteorology. Algeria also participated in global navigation satellite systems and the Global meteorological observations. In that connection, she wished to highlight the successful design, realization and testing of the ALSAT-1 remote-sensing microsatellite, launched in November 2002 with a view to the prevention and management of major risks.

13. Lastly, she expressed her delegation's support for the candidacy of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to become a member of COPUOS.

14. **Mr. Gellet** (France) praised the important compromise reached by COPUOS and its two Subcommittees on the composition of their bureaux and the designation of their chairmen. The General Assembly had called for such a compromise at its previous session; its attainment owed much to the dedication and commitment of the delegation of Austria. He paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman of COPUOS, under whose watch the reforms had taken shape, and welcomed the historic choice of an African candidate as his successor. Lastly, France wished to congratulate China on its first manned space flight, *Shenzhou V*.

15. **Mr. Lopez** (Cuba) congratulated China on its first manned space flight, whose findings were certain to be channelled into benefiting all humankind. Outer space was the common heritage of humankind and its exploration and use should be governed by three basic principles. First, outer space must be preserved for exclusively peaceful purposes; its exploration should go hand in hand with increased international cooperation and the transfer of sophisticated space technology to developing countries in order to narrow the huge gap between the developed and developing countries. Cuba rejected proposals to revise the principles relevant to the Use of Nuclear Sources in Outer Space; those proposals did not take into account the interests of all States, particularly the developing countries.

16. Second, his delegation strongly opposed any plans to pursue the arms race in space. The issue was particularly urgent in view of the latest militarist doctrines, which would inevitably lead to the development and deployment of new and expensive weapons of annihilation and destruction with the aim of increasing the hegemony of the most powerful nations over the rest of the world. His delegation was deeply concerned that some nuclear Powers, which were also space Powers, were blocking negotiations by the Conference on Disarmament on an international instrument for the prevention of an arms race in space. In that connection, a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space would be an important practical measure.

17. Third, with respect to space law, his delegation agreed that the existing legal regime applicable to outer space was not sufficient to guarantee the prevention of an arms race in space. Mechanisms for the adequate monitoring and verification of space law must be adopted as a matter of urgency.

18. His delegation supported the strengthening of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees. It welcomed the increased participation by Member States as observers in the forty-sixth session of COPUOS and fully supported the request by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to become a member of that Committee.

19. Cuba attached special importance to reducing to a minimum the potential consequences of space debris, and to focusing greater attention on the collision of space objects, particularly those containing nuclear power sources. Responsibilities in that area must be clearly defined.

20. In conclusion, he called for greater international and regional cooperation in outer space, which should in no way be privatized or limited to a select group of developed States.

21. **Mr. Yahya** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) congratulated China on becoming the third country to launch a manned spacecraft, thereby furthering the efforts to explore space for the benefit of all mankind, despite such tragic incidents as the recent loss of the space shuttle Columbia and its crew.

22. His country strongly supported the role of COPUOS in the implementation of the plan of action proposed by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to give effect to the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as well as the allocation of all necessary financial resources to implement the related programmes, particularly the strengthening of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and programmes of benefit to the developing countries in such areas as disaster management, tele-education and tele-medicine, environmental protection, management of natural resources, and education and capacity-building. His delegation was also in favour of supporting the regional centres for space science and technology education. It attached particular importance to the problem of space debris and the need for international cooperation to address that issue and the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources on board, with space debris. Other matters of interest to his delegation were the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit. His delegation also supported the drafting of a universal comprehensive convention on international space law together with arrangements to prevent the militarization of outer space.

23. His country, which attached particular importance to space science and its various applications, had established a Centre for Space Science for that purpose in 1991 which maintained wide-ranging regional and international relations. His country had also sent observers to attend meetings of COPUOS and had contributed financial assistance to certain activities of that Committee.

24. His Government reiterated its request to COPUOS to grant it full membership. A decision to that effect would improve the Committee's geographical balance, strengthen the role of Africa and provide a powerful stimulus to the developing countries, encouraging them to play a greater role in international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. It would also be an indication that political differences between States did not prevent their cooperation on peaceful and humanitarian matters.

25. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) thanked Committee members for congratulating China on its successful launch of the "*Shenzhou V*" manned spacecraft. His Government had always believed that outer space should be used solely for peaceful purposes. Its increasing militarization was not only posing a grave threat but also negatively affecting international arms control, disarmament efforts and international security in general. A legally binding international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was urgently needed.

26. With regard to the Legal Subcommittee's deliberations on the draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, his delegation was not opposed to designating the United Nations as the supervisory authority, provided that the Organization would not bear an additional financial burden and would be immune from liability for damages. The terms of the draft protocol should be based on existing space law and respect for the fundamental principles contained therein. In the event of conflict, those existing principles should prevail. His delegation supported continuing efforts to find specific ways to harmonize the draft protocol with the existing legal regime applicable to outer space.

27. As co-chair of the action team for recommendation 7 on disaster reduction and management, his delegation had participated actively in the implementation of the recommendations of

UNISPACE III. Together with Canada and France, it would continue its efforts to implement the work plan and to promote the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system.

28. China's space activities in the past year, had included the successful launching of the *Shenzhou V* manned spacecraft on 15 October, following the successful launching and recovery of the test spacecraft *Shenzhou III* and *Shenzhou IV*. Additionally, the fourth polar-orbiting meteorological satellite, *Fengyun-1D*, and the first marine satellite, *Haiyang-1*, had been successfully launched, upgrading China's capacity for global meteorological observation, the exploration of marine resources, marine pollution control, maritime disaster monitoring and control, and marine environmental protection. They also played a significant role in China's integrated coastal management and regional economic development planning. In May, China's third navigation satellite, *Beidou-1*, had been successfully launched into orbit, forming a regional navigation and positioning network that was expected to boost national economic development in such areas as transportation, meteorology, the petroleum industry, oceanography, forest fire prevention, disaster forecast, telecommunications and public security. In the past year, China had also cooperated with many other countries, including Brazil, in the field of outer space.

29. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) said that the tragic loss of the United States space shuttle earlier in the year had been a stark reminder of the difficulties and dangers that remained in the quest to explore the world beyond the Earth's atmosphere. At the same time, the People's Republic of China was to be congratulated for its admirable recent achievement in human space flight.

30. The 1962 Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space represented a significant first step in codifying the fundamental legal principles governing the orderly exploration and use of outer space and had set the stage for the four core treaties that still governed space activities. Those treaties established a framework that had encouraged outer space exploration for the benefit of both space-faring and non-space-faring nations, on a humanitarian and non-discriminatory basis, ensuring freedom of scientific investigation and bearing in mind the simple but profound humanitarian notion that astronauts should be regarded as envoys of mankind and rendered all possible international assistance.

31. There was now an unprecedented level of international cooperation in space. The United States had a long and successful history of civil space cooperation with other partners, having concluded over 3,000 agreements with over 100 nations and international organizations. There was now a significant private sector presence in outer space. The position taken by a few delegations that COPUOS should consider matters relating to the militarization of outer space was therefore unjustified. There was no scarcity of multilateral bodies where disarmament matters could and were appropriately being discussed, and COPOUS, as the only standing body of the General Assembly to consider international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, was not one of them.

32. Regarding the Legal Subcommittee, the United States believed that the preliminary draft protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment would facilitate the commercial financing that was key to the success of private space activities. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's work on nuclear power sources in space had been particularly successful. His delegation was also pleased to note that the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) had submitted preliminary guidelines on debris mitigation to the Subcommittee, a pivotal step in ensuring the preservation of near-Earth space for future generations. The Subcommittee's consideration of the use of space technology for the medical sciences and public health could yield very useful results. His delegation welcomed the decision to consider new agenda items at its next session relating to solar terrestrial physics and an integrated space-based global natural-disaster management system.

33. The session of COPUOS itself had been most productive. His delegation welcomed the substantial progress made by the UNISPACE III action teams and the Committee's decision to consider new items on space education and the use of space technology for water resources management at its next session.

34. **Ms. Anguiano** (Mexico) said that her Government, congratulated the Government of China on the successful conclusion of its first manned space flight. Her Government was aware of the enormous benefits to be derived by the developing countries from

the whole range of activities in outer space, and therefore endorsed the direction taken by COPUOS in bringing its work closer in line with the major United Nations priorities.

35. Mexico was proud that one of its nationals was now directing the Office for Outer Space Affairs and was pleased that the United Nations Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, headquartered in Brazil and in Mexico, had been established. The courses offered by the Centre would strengthen the capacity of the countries of the region to use space science and technology for their own development.

36. The action teams established by COPUOS to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE-III had done particularly useful work. Mexico had taken part in three of them. That work would lead to projects addressing specific problems in countries confronted with a variety of conditions.

37. The Legal Subcommittee should make greater efforts to persuade more countries to ratify or accede to the outer space treaties. The Subcommittee should also provide more assistance to States wishing to adopt legislation compatible with those instruments.

38. The system of equitable geographical rotation in the membership of the bureaux of COPUOS and its two subcommittees and the practice of holding informal consultations between the bureaux would no doubt revitalize the work of the Committee.

39. **Mr. Kuzmenkov** (Russian Federation) congratulated China on putting its first cosmonaut into space and said that it was an event of historic significance which showed the whole world the enormous contribution that country could make to scientific and technological progress.

40. The Russian Federation consistently held the position that placing weapons of any kind in outer space should be prohibited and that the use of or threat of the use of force in space or from space must be renounced. Unfortunately, recent discussion by COPUOS of the ways and means of supporting the regime of the peaceful uses of outer space had been insufficiently active and the subject had not received the attention it deserved. The Russian Federation called on Member States to make full use of the Committee's unique potential as the body in which fruitful discussion of the subject should take place.

41. The Russian Federation supported the progressive development of international space law, and regarded COPUOS and its Subcommittees as playing the leading role in that process. At the suggestion of the Russian Federation, those bodies had taken up the question of the expediency and desirability of elaborating a single comprehensive convention on space law. There was an urgent need to adapt the existing norms of international space law to current requirements and realities. A comprehensive convention would not only codify existing norms but could make a significant contribution to the progressive development of international law. The "package" approach proposed by the Russian Federation could be a more acceptable way of reconciling the interests of member States without infringing on their sovereign rights or on their priorities in the area of space activities. Drawing up an international legal instrument of the nature and scale of a comprehensive convention would require significant efforts on the part of the world community, but the benefits were worth it.

42. **Mr. Abiodun** (Nigeria), after extending congratulations to China, said that the peaceful use of outer space offered an opportunity for global cooperation and advancement through the protection and management of the environment. Space science and technology were being used increasingly to monitor the implementation of international agreements, and space applications had become fundamental to achieving sustainable development in both industrialized and developing countries.

43. Commending the reorganization of the bureaux of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, he said that his delegation looked forward to working with them on issues such as space education and the mitigation of natural disasters. Nigeria was also participating in three of the action teams.

44. His Government had developed a space policy and programme and established a national space research and development agency. The focus of its policy was on the development of indigenous capability in the major areas of space science and technology and on using space capabilities as a tool for resource management, infrastructure development, environmental monitoring, sustainable development and communications. Its space agency had collaborated with others within and outside Africa; it had, for instance, worked with South Africa to develop a land information system to improve rice production in

Nigeria. In September, Nigeria had launched its first space satellite — the Sat-I — a low-Earth-orbit microsatellite for disaster monitoring, which was part of a constellation of four other microsatellites owned by the United Kingdom, Algeria, Thailand and Viet Nam. Nigeria had also recently signed the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention.

45. In connection with the COPUOS recommendations on inter-agency cooperation, Nigeria suggested that United Nations agencies engaged in space activities should always take into consideration the infrastructures in the developing countries in which they worked, infrastructures which had often been put in place by the United Nations itself through the regional centres for space science and technology education.

46. **Mr. Rao** (India) said that his delegation welcomed the progress achieved by COPUOS at its forty-sixth session, notably the plan to rotate the five bureau posts among the five regional groups, and expressed satisfaction with the work of the two Subcommittees. His Government hoped that the report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session would provide an opportunity to take a critical look at the practical achievements resulting from the UNISPACE-III recommendations and their benefits, in quantifiable terms, for the developing countries.

47. His delegation noted with appreciation the activities covered by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, in spite of budgetary constraints. One of the programme's very important priority themes was that of the integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. India fully endorsed the COPUOS plan to hold a one-day workshop during its next session focusing on satellite-based communication as a vital component in coping with natural disasters, and requested all Member States to encourage as many communications satellites operators as possible to participate. India was pleased to note that space systems-based tele-medicine had been included in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and considered that the work of the Legal Subcommittee on the status and applications of the five outer space treaties deserved the full support of Member States.

48. Turning to the achievements of India's space programme in the past year, he said that in April 2003 a multi-purpose satellite built by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), INSAT-3A, had been launched into a geostationary transfer orbit, and had since been operationalized for television broadcasting, telecommunications, search and rescue and meteorological services. The second developmental flight of India's geosynchronous launch vehicle had been successfully carried out in May 2003, and an Indian communications satellite, INSAT-3E, had been launched on board an Ariane-V launch vehicle in September 2003. India's space programme was placing particular emphasis on such space applications as a tele-medicine, distance education and the use of remote-sensing satellites for the sustainable development of natural resources.

49. International cooperation was an important component of India's space programme. ISRO had hosted the twenty-first meeting of the IADC in March 2003 and had signed a memorandum of understanding on bilateral cooperation with the Canadian Space Agency. The Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, which was affiliated with the United Nations and operated from India, continued to make good progress, providing specialist courses for more than 500 scholars from nearly 40 countries.

50. **Mr. Lichem** (Austria) said it was appropriate that in the current International Year of Freshwater the opportunity should be taken to focus on the contribution which space science and technology could make to the development and use of water resources. Unsustainable development and global warming had created dramatic conditions with regard to the availability of water resources in some regions, and the problems were exacerbated when water was shared among different uses and hence among different jurisdictions. There was also the question of competing interests among sovereign jurisdictions which shared international water resources either as international rivers or as transboundary aquifers. The supply of space-based data could make a most important contribution to solving the inter-jurisdictional dimension of water resources development and use. Shared data upon which policies, programmes, project development and operations could be based already represented a most significant institutional advancement. Austria therefore welcomed wholeheartedly the decision of COPUOS to include in its agenda a new item entitled "Space and water".

51. The Committee's new focus was already supported by concrete programmes and initiatives, including the European Space Agency's TIGER Programme of "Earth Observation for Integrated Water Resources Management in Africa". A recent international workshop on the topic, held in Rabat, Morocco, had formulated a series of specific recommendations on how to proceed in the African region with regard to space technology applications for water management. The plan of action adopted at the workshop included the establishment within national water resources administrations of focal points for "water and space", the development of institutional capacities for African water agencies and the provision of privileged and where possible free access to space-based data in a timely fashion. An international conference, to be held in Chile in early April 2004, would focus on implementing space technology for water resources management in Latin America. In view of the difficult water resources situation in Central Asia, it had been suggested that a similar event be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna in early May 2004 to review the contribution space could make to enhanced cooperation in international water resources management in the Aral Sea basin.

52. Austria was very pleased to note the interest in and readiness to contribute effectively to the "space and water" initiative on the part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as national and regional space agencies.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.