



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria)

later: Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/43/20, A/43/562)

1. Mr. MAJID (Afghanistan) said that international co-operation was the best way to ensure that outer space, which was the common heritage of all mankind, would be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In that regard, the United Nations and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) had an important role to play in enabling all countries, regardless of their state of development, to benefit from scientific and technological advances.
2. Afghanistan appreciated the work of the Committee and its sub-committees during the 1988 session towards strengthening international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Such co-operation could be based on multilateral, regional and bilateral activities and the implementation of specific programmes to provide assistance to all countries, in particular to developing countries.
3. In accordance with the Agreement signed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, the first Afghan-Soviet space flight had been launched on 29 August 1988. That space programme was particularly important for the national economy as it enabled Afghanistan to discover the natural resources concealed beneath its sub-soil and to prepare precise topographical and hydrological maps. The assistance provided by the Soviet Union attested to the extension of co-operation between the two countries to outer space and to the solidarity and good-neighbourliness which motivated them.
4. Afghanistan supported all co-operation activities conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and expressed the hope that it would have sufficient resources to be able to continue its activities, particularly in the training of personnel in developing countries. In that regard it was to be hoped that countries with major space exploration capabilities would extend their assistance to the developing countries.
5. Afghanistan attached particular importance to the work of the Committee and its two sub-committees. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should continue to follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). In that regard, the broader use of the results of remote sensing activities was very important for the promotion of development.
6. As the geostationary orbit was a limited natural resource, the Legal Sub-Committee, in its elaboration of principles governing the activities of States in the use of the geostationary orbit, should take account of the rights of all countries, particularly the developing countries. In that regard, Afghanistan welcomed the inclusion of the new agenda item entitled "Consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and

(Mr. Majid, Afghanistan)

utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries".

7. It was regrettable that outer space was increasingly being used for military objectives; that trend should be stopped. His delegation supported the Stockholm Declaration adopted by the Six in 1988 and endorsed the principle that military competition must not be introduced into new fields. Such competition would only increase international tensions. Therefore, it was essential to avoid the extension of the arms race to outer space. The proposed world space organization should formulate ways and means of achieving that objective.

8. Mr. NOREEN (Sweden) said that military competition must not be allowed to spread into outer space, as the latter, according to the Stockholm Declaration, was the heritage of all mankind. In that regard, the Conference on Disarmament was the appropriate forum for reaching an agreement to prevent an arms race in outer space.

9. As to co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, COPUOS had obtained positive results, as was shown by the conclusion of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. However, it was disappointing to observe that, in recent years, the Committee had made hardly any progress, and it was to be feared lest such a situation should lead the United Nations to play an increasingly marginal role in that field.

10. Sweden particularly regretted that the Committee and its sub-committees had not been able to achieve more substantial results concerning the safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The importance of that question had been clearly demonstrated by the widespread concern raised by the re-entry of the satellite Cosmos 1900 into the atmosphere. An accident could have occurred. That was why international safety principles for the use of nuclear power sources in outer space must speedily be established.

11. Agreement had been reached to date on two principles regarding nuclear power sources, i.e., notification and assistance to States. The Legal Sub-Committee had also agreed on a draft principle concerning the applicability of international law. However, many other aspects of the safe use of nuclear power sources needed to be addressed.

12. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had an important role to play in the formulation of new principles. In 1988 the Sub-Committee had considered the dangers caused by space debris, which was a problem that undoubtedly required further study. The report on space debris of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) which was to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at its next session, should also be made available to the Legal Sub-Committee before its session in 1989.

(Mr. Noreen, Sweden)

13. UNISPACE 82 had made recommendations aimed at the strengthening of international space co-operation. Some of them had been implemented, but the pace of implementation generally was too slow. One of the most important recommendations was to strengthen the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. However, that programme could only be strengthened if it had a sound financial basis. In that regard, his delegation encouraged the Secretariat to continue to seek arrangements with other United Nations agencies in order to give the programme additional financial resources. Those countries which had not already made voluntary contributions should also do so. Sweden was currently organizing, on a bilateral basis, training courses in remote sensing. If they succeeded, it would consider doing so on a multilateral basis also through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

14. Perhaps new approaches and more effective methods of work were needed to give impetus to the activities of COPUOS. Nevertheless, genuine progress would not be achieved unless Member States were committed to the principles laid down in the treaties on outer space, were convinced that international space co-operation was in the interest of all countries and recognized the important role of the United Nations in that field.

15. Mr. PERRI (Brazil) said that there was reason to be satisfied with the work completed in 1988 on outer space matters. The Working Group of the Whole, reconvened to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, had continued its work and had submitted a well-structured and meaningful set of recommendations for approval. The work carried out by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space was instrumental to the effort being undertaken in the Working Group of the Legal Sub-Committee on the same subject. Giving scientific advice to the Legal Sub-Committee remained one of the most important responsibilities of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and that was one aspect of its work that his delegation would like to see strengthened.

16. Brazil viewed the adoption of the new item on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee as an opportunity to add fresh elements to the body of international law on outer space and to give new momentum to co-operation between those countries that had a space programme and those that did not. Echoing the views already expressed by the Group of 77 during the previous session of the Sub-Committee, his delegation supported the immediate convening of a Working Group of the Legal Sub-Committee to conduct the discussion on that agenda item. In order to assist the Working Group in its deliberations, Member States should communicate promptly to the Secretary-General their views on the priority they gave to the specific subjects under that agenda item, particularly information on their national legal framework relating to the implementation of the principles contained in article 1 of the Outer Space Treaty. The Secretariat should also be asked to prepare a compilation of existing international legal instruments and all other norms governing international co-operation.

(Mr. Perri, Brazil)

17. The recent climate of international understanding had opened up new prospects for international co-operation in outer space. It was to be hoped that that development would promote knowledge in the area of space science and technology for the benefit of mankind. An increased interchange of scientific and technical information for peaceful purposes must not run up against artificial obstacles. The common endeavour should be geared towards furthering social, economic and technological development so as to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries.

18. Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia), welcoming the Committee's results, said that its achievements had been made possible through the realization by all Member States of the pressing need to further the objectives of international co-operation in outer space. Space science and technology and the legal codification of the utilization of outer space had greatly contributed to facilitating global development and had enabled developing countries in particular to start their own outer space programmes and projects in accordance with their development goals. Thus, more than ever before, the Committee was called upon to develop a framework to ensure the equitable sharing of the knowledge and technology derived from outer space activities.

19. In the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the reconvened Working Group of the Whole had continued to identify further areas and measures to increase co-operation on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 and to strengthen the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The developed countries must increase significantly their contributions to that programme.

20. The Working Group should also take up the problems facing many developing countries which had already developed their own space application programmes and projects. Indonesia's experience in the areas of space-based telecommunications, remote sensing and rocketry clearly showed the need for developing countries to enhance their domestic research and development capability, because only when scientists and technicians from developing countries were able to adapt, modify and create custom-designed specifications would they be in a position to make rational choices and to interact with the outer space industry. Therefore, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should give serious consideration to the proposals on that subject contained in document A/AC.105/394.

21. Progress in space science and technology required the drafting of a corresponding legal framework. In that connection, the new item placed on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee would enable an objective assessment to be made of the gaps in the law. It would be advisable to convene a working group of the whole entrusted with setting out the main parameters and defining the broad guidelines of work on the new item.

22. In May 1988, Indonesia's province of North Moluccas had experienced the consequences of debris from re-entering space objects. Although the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency still had direct relevance, it did not deal with certain essential aspects, such as prior

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

notification, safety provisions and procedures, and the question of liability. Those and other issues should be considered as a matter of priority on the basis of document A/AC.105/C.2/L.154/Rev.3, submitted by Canada.

23. On the question of the geostationary orbit, his delegation was pleased that agreement had been reached on the concept of equitable access for developing countries and that the geographical situation of certain countries had been acknowledged. Indonesia and the other equatorial countries had always stressed the need for genuine negotiations on such vital issues for developing countries as the establishment of a sui generis legal régime for the geostationary orbit. His Government urged those delegations that had not already done so to participate in the deliberations on that important question.

24. The growing militarization of outer space was a source of deep concern. In that context, COPUOS could make a meaningful contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, although the latter should continue to be seized of the question of preventing the militarization of outer space.

25. His delegation supported the proposal to declare 1992 the International Space Year and to convene a third United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. Coinciding as it would with the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Geophysical Year and the tenth anniversary of UNISPACE 1982, the conference would enable the international community to undertake an appraisal of the situation with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space and the promotion of international co-operation in the field. It was therefore to be hoped that the Special Political Committee would react favourably to the proposal.

26. Mr. ISHIDA (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased at the adoption by consensus, at the twenty-seventh session of the Legal Sub-Committee, of a new item relating to the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States. His delegation thought that Member States should have a full exchange of views on the question and should take a decision on the proper direction in which to proceed. His country attached great importance to the safe use of nuclear power sources in space and considered it urgently necessary to establish principles governing the safety of satellites using nuclear power sources, particularly in view of incidents in which Cosmos satellites had fallen back to Earth. Therefore, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should consider, from the technical standpoint, concrete measures for ensuring the safe use of nuclear-power sources in space, while the Legal Sub-Committee should examine the legal side of that question. For that reason, his delegation welcomed the progress made by the Working Group at the twenty-fifth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee with respect to Principles 2 and 3, as well as the constructive discussion of the Working Group at the twenty-seventh session of the Legal Sub-Committee, which had led to the adoption by consensus of Principle 1 relating to the applicability of international law. It was to be hoped that, with the increased time allocated to the question, the Sub-Committees would reach agreements on the remaining principles as soon as possible.

(Mr. Ishida, Japan)

27. With regard to implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, it was to be hoped that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would play a more substantial role in the future, so as to ensure that activities relating to international co-operation would be carried out efficiently. On the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space, his delegation continued to believe that delimitation without clear scientific criteria would not only be inappropriate but could also curtail future space activities. With regard to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit (GSO), it was crystal clear that the GSO belonged to outer space and accordingly was governed by the Outer Space Treaty. Moreover, the GSO was a limited natural resource and the International Telecommunication Union was responsible for questions regarding its utilization.

28. At the session of the Committee held in June 1988, his country and seven other countries had submitted a working paper on enhancement of the efficiency of the work of the Committee and its two sub-committees, in which they had proposed the establishment of a working group to consider the working methods of those bodies, including the frequency and duration of sessions and the flexibility of their agendas. His delegation regretted that the proposal had not been adopted. However, many Member States recognized the importance of enhancing the efficiency of the Committee's work. His delegation found that encouraging because it was convinced of the necessity of a systematic review of the working methods of the Committee, taking into account actual needs and conditions, and hoped that discussions on the matter would continue.

29. His delegation noted with appreciation the efforts undertaken by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to make its work more interesting to scientists and experts by selecting a special theme for each session. The symposium organized at the last session of the Sub-Committee by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) on microgravity experiments in space and their applications had been very instructive. Given the global importance of environmental problems, the symposium which COSPAR and IAF were expected to arrange on the special theme for the next session ("Space technology as an instrument for combating environmental problems, particularly those of developing countries") would also be very useful.

30. Bearing in mind that international co-operation was indispensable to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, his country had carried out a number of programmes in the fields of scientific observation and applied uses. Its first-remote sensing satellite, Marine Observation Satellite (MOS-1), launched in February 1987, had helped to obtain useful data in such fields as agriculture, forestry, fishery, topography and geology, land use and resource development. Those data had been disseminated on a non-discriminatory basis, and in co-operation with the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, Japan had conducted a research programme on data analysis technology, marine resources and land use development technologies. The Japan Meteorological Agency also directly transmitted cloud pictures obtained from the Geostationary Meteorological Satellite (GMS) to the 13 member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and

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(Mr. Ishida, Japan)

the Pacific. His country intended to continue pursuing its space activities and to participate in international efforts in that vitally important area.

31. Mr. Noworyta (Poland) took the Chair.

32. Mr. DUTT (India), recapitulating the progress made by his country's space programme during the preceding year, said that on 17 March 1988, a Vostok rocket had placed India's first operational remote-sensing satellite IRS-1A in an almost perfect sun synchronous orbit. Through the satellite, several development projects in the areas of agriculture and forestry, wasteland mapping, flood area mapping, prediction of drought, ground-water sources, integrated district-level planning, inter alia, had progressed on a nation-wide scale. Work on the launching of a second IRS satellite had already begun. The multi-purpose INSAT-1C satellite had been launched by Ariane rocket from Kourou on 21 July 1988. The fourth satellite in that series, INSAT-1D would be launched in 1989. The INSAT-1B satellite had already been operational for nearly five years and was being used for telecommunications, television, educational broadcasting, radio networking and meteorological observations. Work on the INSAT-II satellite system, which would replace the INSAT-I system in the early 1990s, was proceeding well. The second flight of the ASL launch vehicle had not met with success, and accordingly, the development of the launcher might have to be postponed until the cause of the failure could be diagnosed and rectified.

33. His country attached great importance to the rapid implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and expressed its appreciation for the work of the Working Group of the Whole established by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. Since the launch of the first artificial satellite 30 years earlier, considerable progress had been made in the conquest and utilization of outer space. Many countries had benefited from the applications of space technology in areas relevant to development such as communications, meteorology and resource management. The immense possibilities which had opened up called for a harmonization of national interests, thus making international co-operation indispensable. The choice of the space activities which could be the subject of greater international co-operation would depend on the specific needs, resources and mechanisms of the countries. Given the mounting costs of space-related projects, increased international co-operation could result in significant economies for all countries concerned. Moreover, the sharing of experiences and technologies would foster a climate of mutual trust. For those reasons, his delegation suggested that, in order to strengthen international co-operation, co-operation projects should aim at increasing the capabilities of the developing countries; that the international co-operative efforts should focus on the conduct of concrete application projects such as the monitoring of flood disasters, coastal erosion and drought; that opportunities for on-the-job training should be expanded and should include the maintenance and operation of earth stations and data processing; and that there should be exchanges of data relating to remote sensing, literature and opportunities for development of space systems.

(Mr. Dutt, India)

34. In order to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, India had set up a programme called "SHARES", which was designed to enable other developing countries to benefit from India's experience in outer space. The programme provided opportunities in the following areas: regular and on-the-job training in such fields as satellite communications, remote sensing, producing television and video-tape programmes for education; the participation of scientists and engineers from other developing countries in some Indian projects and programmes; joint experiments using Indian rockets, satellites and balloons and, possibly, astronomical observatories; exchanges of scientists and engineers; and assistance in system studies in specific areas. The programme also provided some financial support for the participants. Under the programme, 30 persons from eight developing countries had participated in a variety of training programmes in space applications. In addition, India had announced that data from Indian remote-sensing satellites were available to interested countries. India looked forward to further bilateral and international co-operation in outer space, particularly with developing countries and international organizations.

35. The work of the Legal Sub-Committee on the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was closely linked to the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. In particular, the principle relating to the guidelines and criteria for the use of such sources must be considered from the viewpoints of technical feasibility, available technology and the dynamic nature of technological change. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee must reach broader conclusions in that area on the basis of consensus to facilitate progress. His delegation was pleased at the adoption by consensus of a new item to be included in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee and hoped that the deliberations on that item would pave the way for greater international co-operation and spread the benefits of space technology to all nations, particularly the developing countries.

36. With regard to the dangers posed by the militarization of outer space, he pointed out that India was one of the six countries that had adopted the Stockholm Declaration, which reiterated those concerns and outlined the steps to be taken to avert that danger, namely, compliance with the provisions of the ABM Treaty by the parties concerned, a complete ban on anti-satellite weapons and an agreement on banning the testing of those weapons. Those measures were essential in order to ensure that outer space continued to be used for peaceful purposes.

37. Nevertheless, prevention was but one aspect of the question because it was also necessary to promote actively the peaceful uses of outer space by all countries through international co-operation. Space technology could help to solve the problems facing many countries in the world such as hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy and inadequate housing and health care. At the international level, an impartial analysis of each country's requirements with regard to space technology and the elaboration of an implementation plan could be a revolutionary approach to promoting the peaceful use of outer space. In the two major areas of application - communications and remote sensing - the results could be extraordinary. The money required was but a small fraction of the money spent on armaments all over the

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(Mr. Dutt, India)

world. Such an effort would require innovative and creative approaches on the part of all countries and would be in keeping with the world-wide importance of outer space.

38. Mr. KAKOLECKI (Poland) said that over the past year there had been impressive progress in space activities. That was demonstrated, in particular, by the spectacular achievements of the major space Powers, such as the Soviet manned space flights with the participation of international crews, including those with Syrian, Bulgarian and Afghan cosmonauts, and the recent successful flight of the United States space shuttle Discovery. In the United Nations system, there had been more modest, but certainly valuable activities such as the co-ordination and promotion of co-operative projects among States and various training courses.

39. Poland had participated in different fields of international co-operation concerning outer space, first of all in the framework of the Intercosmos programme, and it had continued its activities in such fields as space communications, space physics, geodesy, biology and medicine as well as satellite meteorology. In remote sensing, the Polish Remote Sensing Centre in Warsaw had been equipped with modern instruments for analogue and digital image-processing. Its scientific staff had developed methods for analysis and classification of multi-source remote sensing data. The experience gained in the course of various research and application activities had been successfully used to meet the needs of some developing countries. In particular, Polish specialists had prepared for Algeria and Iraq demographic maps based on an analysis of satellite data. The Centre had recently started a large project sponsored by UNDP and FAO in order to assess global soil moisture on the basis of satellite imagery. The Polish Remote Sensing Centre was prepared to offer training to specialists from developing countries and could assist them in establishing their own centres. Training courses had been organized recently for specialists from some African and Asian countries. Furthermore, a United Nations interregional seminar on remote sensing for development had been held recently in Warsaw.

40. His delegation noted with satisfaction that COPUOS had clearly recognized the need to ensure that outer space continued to be used for peaceful purposes and had agreed that it could make an important contribution to that end. He remained convinced that COPUOS could also assist efforts to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space. Poland reaffirmed its support for the establishment of a world space organization because it believed that that was needed in order to enhance, complement and develop the current structure of international co-operation in the interests of all States. His delegation welcomed the adoption of a new item for the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, as indicated in paragraph 88 of the report of COPUOS (A/43/20). It accordingly supported the idea of establishing a working group within the framework of the Sub-Committee to facilitate the consideration of that question and avoid unnecessary procedural debates. Furthermore, his delegation noted with satisfaction the progress achieved on the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources, the priority objective of which must be to reduce to a minimum the risk of radioactive debris re-entering the atmosphere.

(Mr. Kakolecki, Poland)

41. With regard to the delimitation of outer space, his delegation felt that the distinction between outer space and airspace, which were governed by totally different legal régimes, was a question which must be resolved speedily and whose importance was growing because of the rapid development of space technology and activities. The recent Soviet proposal on the delimitation of space constituted a compromise approach which might facilitate the conclusion of an agreement. Poland continued to favour the regulation of the use of the geostationary orbit to ensure equal rights and equitable access for all States. At the same time, the future solution must respect the essential principle that the geostationary orbit was an integral part of outer space and must be governed by the Outer Space Treaty. Consequently, Poland reaffirmed its support for the proposal made by the German Democratic Republic on that question. His delegation hoped that the improved climate in international relations and the strengthening of the role of the Organization would have a favourable influence on the work of COPUOS and its Sub-Committees and that the latter would make further contributions to the development of peaceful co-operation in outer space.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

42. The CHAIRMAN requested those delegations which wished to take the floor on agenda item 80 (Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India) and agenda item 81 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations) to so inform the Secretariat before 26 October.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.