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Committee on the Peaceful

Uses of Outer Space

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Forty-second session

Vienna, 21 February-4 March 2005

Draft report of the Working Group of the Whole

I. Introduction

1. In accordance with paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 59/116 of 10 December 2004, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, reconvened the Working Group of the Whole. The Working Group of the Whole held [...] meetings, from 23 February to 3 March 2005. It considered the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and the draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Subcommittee, to be held in 2006. At its [...] meeting, on 3 March, the Working Group of the Whole adopted the present report.

2. Muhammad Nasim Shah (Pakistan) was elected Chairman of the Working Group of the Whole at the 622nd meeting of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, on 23 February. In his opening remarks, the Chairman reviewed the mandate of the Working Group of the Whole at its session in 2005. The Working Group had before it a list of issues that it should consider (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.8/Rev.1).

II. United Nations Programme on Space Applications

3. The Working Group of the Whole had before it the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/840) and noted that the Expert had supplemented her report by a statement.

4. The Working Group of the Whole noted the workshops, training courses and long-term fellowships for in-depth training, as well as technical advisory services, as proposed to the Subcommittee in the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/840, annex II).



III. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

5. The Working Group of the Whole had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) (A/59/174);

(b) Status of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.9);

(c) Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III: the way ahead (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.10/Rev.1);

(d) Proposal for a three-year work plan on International Heliophysical Year 2007 (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.13);

(e) Information on the high-level plenary meeting to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005 during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.14);

(f) Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III: actions of possible interest to a large number of Member States (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.15);

(g) Proposal to amend the work plan of the agenda item on near-Earth objects (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.18);

(h) New multi-year work plan for the agenda item on space debris (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.19);

(i) Draft provisional agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-third session (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.20).

6. The Working Group of the Whole noted with appreciation that, pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004, the action teams on an environmental monitoring strategy (recommendation 1), weather and climate forecasting (recommendation 4), knowledge-sharing (recommendation 9), sustainable development (recommendation 11) and near-Earth objects (recommendation 14) would be continuing their work on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

7. The Working Group of the Whole noted with satisfaction that the Action Team on an Environmental Monitoring Strategy (recommendation 1), the Action Team on Sustainable Development (recommendation 11) and the Action Team on Near-Earth Objects (recommendation 14) had met during the forty-third session of the Subcommittee and had reported on the progress made in their work.

8. The Working Group of the Whole noted with satisfaction that, while the Action Team on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (recommendation 10) would not be continuing its work under the structure of an action team, the members of that action team would be continuing their work to maximize the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) to support sustainable

development. The Working Group of the Whole noted with appreciation that the work to establish an international committee on GNSS, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 59/2, had already commenced.

9. The Working Group of the Whole noted that discussions were under way regarding the possible continuation of the work of the Action Team on Public Health (recommendation 6). The Action Team noted with appreciation the offer of the World Health Organization (WHO) to co-chair the team.

10. The Working Group of the Whole noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would assist those action teams in coordinating the start-up phase of their updated work plans among its current members, while seeking to confirm or increase the membership of the teams. The Office would also assist the teams, where requested and within its resources, in their development of the updated work plans. The Working Group of the Whole also noted that the Office would consult the membership of the Action Team on Public Health regarding the possible co-chairmanship of that team by WHO.

11. The Working Group of the Whole agreed to focus its discussion on the implementation of three actions called for in the Plan of Action endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/2: maximizing the benefits of existing space capabilities for disaster management and maximizing the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems to support sustainable development (A/59/174, paras. 252-269); and enhancing capacity-building in space-related activities (A/59/174, paras. 299-310).

12. The Working Group of the Whole also agreed to group the actions proposed in paragraphs 301-309 of the Plan of Action under the heading "Organize a meeting of interested Member States and space agencies to identify parties willing to undertake the actions listed in paragraphs 301-309 of the Plan of Action", with a view to making progress in the implementation of those proposed actions.

13. The Working Group of the Whole considered the contribution that could be made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, which would be held in September 2005 to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Assembly resolution 55/2). The Subcommittee agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should seek further information on the organization of the high-level plenary meeting and the potential for the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to contribute to that work and should report to the Committee on its findings. Based on the information provided by the Office, the Committee could consider whether it could contribute to the high-level plenary meeting and, if it decided to do so, by what mechanism it could contribute.

14. The Working Group of the Whole noted that a number of initiatives were being undertaken to promote greater participation of young people in the areas of space science and engineering and agreed to invite member States, and in particular the permanent observers of the Committee, to report to the Working Group of the Whole during the forty-third session of the Subcommittee on their activities relating to the promotion of space science and engineering among young people.

IV. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

15. The Working Group of the Whole noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/116, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee would submit to the Committee its proposal on the draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Subcommittee, to be held in 2006.

16. The Working Group of the Whole considered the following new multi-year work plans for items to be included in the agenda of the Subcommittee at its forty-third session:

(a) International Heliophysical Year 2007, proposed by the Czech Republic, France, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.13);

(b) Space debris, as agreed by the Working Group on Space Debris (para. [...] of annex [...] to the present report).

17. The Working Group of the Whole also considered proposed amendments to the multi-year work plans for the following items on the agenda of the Subcommittee:

(a) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space, as agreed by the Working Group on Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space (para. [...] of annex [...] to the present report);

(b) Near-Earth objects (A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.18).

18. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that the Subcommittee should consider the item on space debris in accordance with the work plan agreed by the Working Group on Space Debris, as reflected in paragraph [...] of annex [...] to the present report.

19. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that the Subcommittee should continue its consideration of the agenda item on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in accordance with the work plan agreed by the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, as reflected in paragraph [...] of annex [...] to the present report.

20. The Working Group of the Whole agreed to amend the work plan of the agenda item on near-Earth objects for the years 2006 and 2007 as follows:

Year 2006

Reports from Member States and international organizations on their near-Earth object activities, including missions, search and follow-up, as well as plans for future activity.

The Action Team will consider the way forward and, specifically, the possible need for further activity to be carried out nationally, regionally or through international cooperation. Such cooperation should be considered together with the prospects for harmonization and avenues for broader collaboration.

Consider the need for a working group in 2007.

Update the work programme for the third year as necessary and consider the need for intersessional work.

Year 2007

Continue reporting by Member States and international organizations on the range of activities related to near-Earth objects.

The Action Team should continue its work and make proposals as necessary, building on its work in the second year.

Consider the range of, and suitable mechanisms for, further work on near-Earth objects.

21. The Working Group of the Whole agreed to amend the work plan of the agenda item on space-system-based disaster management support for the year 2006 as follows:

Year 2006

Review of the recommendations of the Action Team on Disaster Management, with a view to their implementation.

Organization of a one-day workshop/symposium on disaster management involving communication/meteorological satellite operators.

Exchange of information with the International Telecommunication Union and other specialized agencies in the United Nations system on their activities on the subject of space-system-based disaster management support, as well as the regional disaster management structures.

22. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that, starting with its forty-third session, in 2006, the Subcommittee would consider an item on International Heliophysical Year 2007 according to the following multi-year work plan:

Year 2006

Reports on planning activities by the International Heliophysical Year secretariat and interested Member States and scientific organizations. Results of the initial International Heliophysical Year/United Nations Basic Space Science Initiative workshop will be presented by the International Heliophysical Year secretariat.

Year 2007

Reports on national and regional activities related to International Heliophysical Year 2007 by interested Member States, scientific organizations and the International Heliophysical Year secretariat. This update will include information on the progress towards the conduct of outreach, educational and research campaigns and on the definition and plans for deployment of instrument arrays.

Year 2008

Reports by interested Member States, scientific organizations and the International Heliophysical Year secretariat on the progress of scientific campaigns and establishment of International Heliophysical Year databases. Plans for the continued deployment of instrument arrays and future activities will be made available.

23. The Working Group of the Whole recommended the following draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 2006:

1. General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities.
2. United Nations Programme on Space Applications.
3. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).
4. Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment.
5. Items to be considered under work plans:
 - (a) Space debris;
(Work for 2006 as reflected in the multi-year work plan in paragraph [...] of annex [...] to the present report)
 - (b) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;
(Work for 2006 as reflected in the multi-year work plan in paragraph [...] of annex [...] to the present report)
 - (c) Space-system-based telemedicine;
(Work for 2006 as reflected in the multi-year work plan contained in paragraph 138 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on its forty-sixth session (A/58/20))
 - (d) Near-Earth objects;
(Work for 2006 as reflected in the multi-year work plan in paragraph [...] above)
 - (e) Space-system-based disaster management support;
(Work for 2006 as reflected in paragraph [...] above)
 - (f) International Heliophysical Year 2007.
(Work for 2006 as reflected in the multi-year work plan in paragraph [...] above)

6. Single issue/item for discussion: Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries.
 7. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, including identification of subjects to be dealt with as single issues/items for discussion or under multi-year work plans.
 8. Report to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
24. The Working Group of the Whole recalled the agreement to continue the practice of alternating each year the organization of the symposium by COSPAR and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) with the symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry. The Working Group of the Whole agreed that, in 2006, the symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry would be organized and the symposium by COSPAR and IAF would be suspended.
25. The Working Group of the Whole recommended that the next symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry, to be held during the forty-third session of the Subcommittee, in 2006, should address synthetic aperture radar (SAR) missions and their applications. The Working Group of the Whole also agreed that that symposium should be held on the afternoon of the first day of the forty-third session of the Subcommittee and that the full time available to the Subcommittee on that afternoon should be used for the symposium.

V. Other matters

26. The Working Group of the Whole recommended that it be reconvened during the forty-third session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 2006.
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