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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations
Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	2
II. WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE	4 - 5	2
III. INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION	6 - 9	2
IV. STUDIES	10	3
V. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS	11 - 15	3
VI. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES	16	5
VII. INTERNATIONAL SPACE INFORMATION SERVICE	17	6
VIII. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS	18	6
IX. REGIONAL MECHANISMS OF CO-OPERATION	19	6

* A/44/150.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/56 of 6 December 1988, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. 1/

2. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference.

3. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space considered the question of the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference during their 1989 sessions. Accordingly, the information contained in the present report reflects primarily the result of the work of the Committee, whose report is also before the General Assembly. 2/

II. WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

4. The Working Group of the Whole was reconvened by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at its 1989 session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/56, with a view to improving the execution of activities relating to international co-operation, particularly those included in the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and to proposing concrete steps to increase such co-operation and make it more efficient.

5. At its 1989 session, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole as contained in its report (A/AC.105/429, annex II). The Committee recommended that the Working Group of the Whole should be reconvened the following year to continue its work.

III. INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION

6. In paragraph 23 of its resolution 43/56, the General Assembly requested all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to co-operate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. In that connection, the Committee noted with appreciation the participation in all stages of its work and that of its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee by representatives of United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and other international organizations.

7. United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, particularly the United

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), have extensive space-related programmes that are contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Details of these programmes can be found in the yearly reports of the Secretary-General on co-ordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. The latest report (A/AC.105/415) contains an overview of the agencies' work programmes for 1989 and 1990.

8. The eleventh session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities is scheduled to be held in September 1989 at the headquarters of ITU to continue its in-depth review of remote sensing applications within the United Nations system on the basis of a working paper prepared by an ad hoc group for the 1988 Inter-Agency Meeting.

9. At its 1989 session, the Committee endorsed the view of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that the United Nations should continue to seek the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international funding institutions and that the secretariat should take note of, and operate within, the UNDP funding procedures.

IV. STUDIES

10. At its 1989 session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole made at its third session, held in 1989, and noted that they included certain studies and reports of relevance to the recommendations of the Conference. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, at its twenty-sixth session, expressed its appreciation that a final report on environmental effects of space activities prepared by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Aeronautics Federation (IAF) had been submitted to its session (A/AC.105/420), as had been called for by the Committee, 3/ and commended COSPAR and IAF for the valuable information which the report contained.

V. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS

11. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Conference that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be directed towards seven specific objectives. The activities conducted in 1988 by the Programme and the plans for the period 1989/90 to meet those objectives are contained in the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/421).

12. Activities carried out or planned under the Programme in 1989, in co-operation with other United Nations bodies, include four short-term training courses on

remote-sensing applications. The first, which focused on the use of infra-red and radar sensor systems in hydrological and agrometeorological applications, was organized by the United Nations, FAO, WMO and the European Space Agency (ESA) in co-operation with the Government of Australia; the second, which will focus on applications of remote sensing to geological sciences, is being organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic; the third, which will focus on the use of remote-sensing data and geographical information systems in agriculture management, is being organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the fourth, which will focus on the applications of remote sensing in land use, is being organized by the United Nations and FAO in co-operation with the Government of Italy. In addition, a workshop, which focused on oceanographic/marine space information systems, was organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Government of Pakistan; this activity was supported and funded by the Government of Pakistan, UNDP and the United Nations. Finally, two international meetings of experts were organized: the first, which focused on remote sensing and satellite meteorology applications to marine resources and coastal management, was organized by the United Nations in co-operation with FAO, ESA and the Government of Spain and was also funded by UNDP; the second, which focused on the development of remote-sensing skills and knowledge, was organized by the United Nations in co-operation with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

13. In promoting the development of indigenous capability, the Programme will award 34 long-range fellowships (two by Austria, 10 by Brazil, three by the German Democratic Republic, 15 by the USSR and four by ESA) in 1989 for in-depth training of participants from developing countries in the areas of microwave technology, satellite communications engineering, satellite meteorology, basic space sciences, satellite geodesy, cartography, aerial photography and remote sensing. All those fellowships have been renewed for 1990 in the same disciplines as those offered in 1989. In addition, beginning in 1989/90, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has established six new fellowships in basic space sciences at the post-doctoral level, to promote the uses of the achievements in space science and technology for the benefit of social and economic development of States.

14. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications issued a guidebook entitled Fellowship and Training Opportunities Offered Within the Framework of the United Nations Space Applications Programme (SAP/88/001), along with the corresponding instructions and application booklets (SAP/88/002 and SAP/88/003) for the use of potential applicants for the long-term fellowship programme and the short-term training courses, respectively. The contents of those documents will be updated as necessary.

15. In 1990, two short-term training courses and three workshops are planned:

(a) A United Nations training course on remote sensing technology for educators, being organized for the benefit of member States of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA);

(b) A United Nations/FAO international training course on remote-sensing applications, in co-operation with the Government of Italy;

(c) A United Nations/ESA workshop on microwave remote sensing technology, being organized for the benefit of member States of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC);

(d) A United Nations regional workshop on communications technology for development, being organized for the benefit of ECLAC member States;

(e) A United Nations workshop on basic space research for the benefit of the developing countries, particularly of the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

VI. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

16. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly decided that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should, upon request by Member States or any of the specialized agencies, be directed towards the provision or arrangements for provision of technical advisory services on space applications projects. With regard to this mandate, the Programme offered assistance in the following regions:

(a) To ECA, by developing a project document on the "Remote sensing information programme for Africa". This activity was financed by UNDP;

(b) To the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Survey, ECA, by developing a training curriculum for a post-graduate diploma course to develop intermediate and high-level manpower in the applications of remote sensing to agricultural and rangeland management, desertification, drought, natural resources development and environmental monitoring. The first set of post-graduate students for this course was admitted in December 1988;

(c) To Member States on the Atlantic Coast of Africa, in preparing project proposals on the use of space technology and information in the evaluation management and assessment of marine and coastal resources;

(d) To China, by assisting in developing a project document for the establishment of a national telecommunications development centre. Phase one of this project resulted in an overseas study tour by Chinese experts in 1988. The second phase, which is in progress in China, will be reviewed by Chinese experts and foreign consultants in long-distance education programmes;

(e) To the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), by assisting in developing a project proposal on "Indigenous capabilities in remote sensing technology through the provision of relevant education for educators". The implementation of this project is anticipated to begin in 1989/90;

(f) To the Interministerial Committee on the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operation (IOMAC), by assisting in preparing project proposals on the use of space technology and information in the evaluation, management and assessment of marine and coastal resources. Pilot projects on assessment of marine resources

will be conducted with UNDP funding in two countries of the Indian Ocean region in 1989.

Details of those activities are contained in document A/AC.105/421, paragraphs 11 (a) to (e).

VII. INTERNATIONAL SPACE INFORMATION SERVICE

17. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly decided to establish an International Space Information Service, initially consisting of a directory of sources of information and data services to provide direction upon request to accessible data banks and information sources. The activities planned for the implementation of the Service are outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the report of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/313). With regard to this mandate, a revised edition of the publication entitled Education, Training, Research and Fellowship Opportunities in Space Science and Technology and its Applications: A Directory (A/AC.105/422) and an addendum to the publication entitled Information Systems on Space Science and Technology: A Directory (A/AC.105/397/Rev.1/Add.1) have been published. The Committee noted that both directories would be updated as may be necessary and possible within existing resources.

VIII. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

18. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 37/90, the General Assembly appealed to all Governments to make voluntary contributions, either in money or in kind, towards carrying out the recommendations of the Conference. In his note verbale dated 11 March 1983, the Secretary-General brought that paragraph to the attention of Member States, particularly with respect to the newly mandated and expanded activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Member States and Intergovernmental organizations that responded to the appeal since the forty-third session of the Assembly have been mentioned under appropriate headings in the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. 2/ The Committee took note of the disappointment expressed by the developing countries at the lack of financial resources to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

IX. REGIONAL MECHANISMS OF CO-OPERATION

19. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 43/56, the secretariat continued its efforts to strengthen the regional mechanisms of co-operation in carrying out various activities in the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference, in particular those relating to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (see para. 16 (a) to (f) above).

Notes

1/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/44/20).

3/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/42/20), annex II, para. 13 (d).