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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Forty-eighth session
Vienna, 7-18 February 2011

Draft report

Addendum

XII. Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including 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, without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union

1. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/97, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee considered agenda item 14, "Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including 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, without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union", as a single issue/item for discussion.
2. The representatives of Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the observer for Azerbaijan made statements under agenda item 14. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were made by representatives of other member States and by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.
3. The Subcommittee welcomed the information provided in the annual report for 2010 of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radiocommunication Bureau on the use of the geostationary satellite orbit and other orbits

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(www.itu.int/itu-R/space/snl/report), as well as other documents referred to in conference room paper A/AC.105/C.1/2011/CRP.13. The Subcommittee invited ITU to continue submitting reports to it.

4. Some delegations were of the view that the geostationary orbit was a limited natural resource that risked becoming saturated, thereby threatening the sustainability of space activities in that environment; that its exploitation should be rationalized; and that it should be made available to all States, under equitable conditions, irrespective of their current technical capabilities, taking into account in particular the needs of developing countries and the geographical position of certain countries.

5. Some delegations were of the view that in the use of the geostationary orbit account should be taken of the needs of developing countries and priority should be given to space activities that could contribute to sustainable development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

6. Some delegations were of the view that the geostationary orbit provided unique potential for access to communications and information, in particular for assisting developing countries in implementing social programmes and educational projects, and for providing medical assistance. Those delegations were of the view that it was important to use the geostationary orbit in compliance with international law, in accordance with the decisions of ITU and within the legal framework established in the relevant United Nations treaties.

7. The Subcommittee noted that Nigeria and the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) had jointly organized, in the fall of 2010, an international symposium on the theme “Equatorial plane: attributes and characteristics”, and that the symposium examined the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications.

8. Some delegations were of the view that this item should remain on the agenda of the Subcommittee, and that its study could be carried out, as necessary, by working groups or intergovernmental panels in order to ensure the use of the geostationary orbit in accordance with international law.

XIII. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

9. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/97, the Subcommittee considered agenda item 15, “Draft provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”. The Working Group of the Whole, convened pursuant to paragraph 7 of that resolution, considered the draft provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session.

10. The Subcommittee noted that the Secretariat had scheduled the forty-ninth session of the Subcommittee to be held from 6 to 17 February 2012.

11. The Subcommittee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/97, it would submit to the Committee its proposal on the draft provisional agenda for the forty-ninth session of the Subcommittee and

recommended that the following substantive items be included in the draft provisional agenda:

1. General exchange of views and introduction of 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. Space debris.
6. Space-system-based disaster management support.
7. Recent developments in global navigation satellite systems.
8. Items to be considered under workplans:
 - (a) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;
(Work for 2012 as reflected in the multi-year workplan in paragraphs 8 and 9 of annex II to the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-seventh session (A/AC.105/958))
 - (b) Near-Earth objects;
(Work for 2012 as reflected in the multi-year workplan in paragraph [...] of annex [...] to the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-eighth session)
 - (c) International Space Weather Initiative;
(Work for 2012 as reflected in the multi-year workplan in paragraph 16 of annex I to the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-sixth session (A/AC.105/933))
 - (d) Long-term sustainability of outer space activities.
(Work for 2012 as reflected in the terms of reference of the working group on long-term sustainability of outer space activities in paragraph [...] of the appendix to annex [...] to the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-eighth session)
9. Single issue/item for discussion: examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including 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, without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union.

10. Draft provisional agenda for the fiftieth 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 workplans.
12. The Subcommittee agreed that the topic for the symposium to be organized in 2012 by the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in accordance with the agreement reached by the Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session, in 2007 (A/AC.105/890, annex I, para. 24), should be “The Earth observation services industry: market opportunities”. The symposium should target the contribution of the Committee to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and should include observance of the fortieth anniversary of the launch of Landsat-1.
13. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation that open-ended informal consultations had been held during its current session pursuant to the recommendation made by the Committee at its fifty-third session, and welcomed the efforts of the Chair of the Subcommittee to further rationalize the working methods of the Subcommittee.
14. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat had taken measures, in close consultation with the Chair of the Subcommittee, to rationalize and optimize the Subcommittee’s use of time, including by scheduling the symposium during the second week, by scheduling the item entitled “General exchange of views and introduction of reports on national activities” over a longer period of time during the session and by limiting the number of slots for statements per meeting.
15. The Subcommittee agreed that maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of items, in particular those to be considered by working groups.
16. The Subcommittee noted that an increasing number of reports submitted by Member States on their national activities in outer space comprised a summary of those activities and did not exceed three pages, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its fifty-third session. The Subcommittee agreed that this practice should continue to be applied and that Member States should be notified by the Secretariat in cases where this practice was not being followed, as appropriate.
17. The Subcommittee recommended that member States of the Committee should avoid duplicating detailed information provided in their reports on national activities with information provided in statements during the session of the Subcommittee.
18. The Subcommittee agreed that, as a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes and scientific and technical presentations should not exceed 20 minutes in duration.
19. The Subcommittee recommended that member States of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations and under which item, before the start of the session, in order to optimize the plan of work of the session. The Subcommittee also recommended that speaking notes for such presentations should be provided to facilitate the simultaneous interpretation.
20. The Subcommittee expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for its overall management of the current session of the Subcommittee.

21. At its [...] meeting, on [...] February, the Subcommittee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole, contained in section [...] of annex [...] to the present report.

22. The Subcommittee noted that the Working Group of the Whole had also considered the preparations for events to be held at the fifty-fourth session of the Committee to mark the fiftieth anniversary of human space flight and the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee. At its [...] meeting, on [...] February, the Subcommittee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole, contained in section [...] of annex [...] to the present report.
