

United Nations  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1291st  
MEETING

Tuesday, 4 December 1962,  
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 27:

*International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union (continued)*

*General debate (continued)* . . . . . 221  
*Organization of work* . . . . . 224

**Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL**  
(Sudan).

AGENDA ITEM 27

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union (A/5181; A/5203, chap. VII, sect. IV; A/5229; A/5237; A/C.1/879; A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1 Mr. CSATORDAY (Hungary) said that space exploration was not a matter for technicians and scientists alone. The action taken at the present time would decide what future relations in outer space were to be and whether space research was to be used for good or evil.

2. The Committee had before it a report (A/5181) submitted by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), which had assigned that Committee various legal, scientific, technical and organizational tasks. In view of the fact that the resolution gave first place to the legal aspect of the problem, and in view of the nature of the issues involved, his delegation considered that the First Committee should give priority to consideration of the legal problems raised by space exploration. The activities of States in space must be regulated by law. It followed from many provisions of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), that in outer space States must not do anything that constituted a threat to peace, but must co-operate peacefully with one another on a basis of equality, for their common good. Contrary to what the Peruvian representative had said, those principles were not negative in character, but suggested a clear line of policy for the future.

3. His delegation welcomed the United States representative's statement at the 1289th meeting that what was required, more than declarations of general principle or agreements on specific problems, was the as-

urance that the exploration and use of outer space would be for peaceful purposes. Since the United States was not satisfied even with the far-reaching proposals made in that respect by the Soviet Union, it was curious to note that there was no reference in the draft resolution submitted by the United States and Canada (A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) to the legal aspects of outer space activities. Apparently the United States wanted to avoid binding agreements which might hamper its dangerous research into the military uses of outer space. One such dangerous experiment had been the explosion of a nuclear device at a high altitude on 9 July 1962, an act which had virtually extended the nuclear arms race to outer space. That had been a clear violation of international law, and in particular of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, firstly because the resultant radio-activity had hindered the peaceful exploration of space, secondly because it had disrupted telecommunications between States, and thirdly because it had shown a disregard for the legitimate interests of other States. Another alarming development was the orbiting of reconnaissance satellites by the United States. The responsible United States authorities had tried to keep those activities secret, despite their Government's voluntary undertaking to provide full information on all launchings. According to statements in the Press, however, there had been up to twenty launchings of such satellites, designed to photograph the territory of other countries in the interests of military intelligence. Now that their existence had been exposed, the United States representative had tried to justify them by arguing that observation from space was consistent with international law. But if the United States believed that it had the right to spy on other countries, it must accept that they had a right to do likewise.

4. Space law could be developed by analogy with existing international law on other problems. It would be recalled, for example, that the principle of the freedom of the high seas was universally recognized and that the Antarctic had been given the status of *res communis omnium* by a special agreement. Some delegations held the view that the time was not yet ripe for a settlement of the legal issues raised by space exploration and that the United Nations Charter was a sufficient guide for States in their space policies. However, while it was true that the Charter applied to outer space, it was not in itself enough. It did not offer an adequate safeguard against the use of space for military purposes, and it did not make positive provision for practical international co-operation in space. It would be remembered that the Antarctic Treaty, signed at Washington on 1 December 1959, expressly provided that the Antarctic was to be used only for peaceful purposes, although the States signing it had certainly been aware that the Charter obligation to maintain international peace and security applied to that area as to others. There was a whole series of international instruments providing for international

co-operation in the use of the high seas and of air space. It could not be denied, therefore, that an international convention on the peaceful uses of outer space and celestial bodies was necessary and should be concluded as soon as possible. The basis for such a convention had been laid by the Soviet Union in its draft declaration of the basic principles governing the activities of States pertaining to the exploration and use of outer space (A/5181, annex III, sect. A) which his delegation fully supported. The need to establish the basic principles governing such activities had been recognized by international scientific organizations as well as by many Members of the United Nations, for example, by the International Law Association at a recent conference at Brussels and by the International Institute of Space Law of the International Astronautical Federation at its Fifth Symposium, held in September 1962 at Varna, Bulgaria. If the States concerned accepted and applied the basic principles proposed by the Soviet Union, they would be giving the world the assurance that their activities in outer space would genuinely contribute to international peace and security.

5. Some progress had been made in the direction of international understanding. The report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space indicated that the members of the Committee had unanimously approved the recommendations of its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee concerning the exchange of scientific information and international research programmes. It was also gratifying to note the contributions made by the specialized agencies and other bodies in promoting international co-operation in space. They would have a still more important role in the future, but their work would be effective only if it was based on firm political and legal foundations. He therefore hoped that the United States would show the same readiness to come to an agreement on the establishment of a régime of law in outer space as the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries had done. The successes of space exploration were achievements of mankind as a whole, and it was essential that future advances should not be a source of animosity but should strengthen the willingness of States to co-operate with each other. The Hungarian delegation was willing to work towards that end.

6. Sir Patrick DEAN (United Kingdom) said that the past year had seen many striking achievements in space research. The United States and the Soviet Union had launched manned satellites, and equally valuable, if less spectacular, work in space study had been carried out both in those countries and in a number of others, through satellites, sounding rockets and observation. In the field of international co-operation in outer space the European Space Research Organisation was working on the construction of a sounding rocket range in northern Sweden, the design of a technological centre and the provision of scholarships and fellowships for space scientists, and the European Launcher Development Organisation was co-ordinating the work of a number of countries in the production of a multi-stage rocket. In addition, the first satellite launched jointly by the United States and the United Kingdom had produced valuable results.

7. While the greatest achievements in space could be made only by the United States or the Soviet Union, indeed perhaps only by those two States working together, almost every State could make a significant contribution to space research in an international

framework. For that reason, his delegation particularly welcomed the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, mentioned in that Committee's report (A/5181). Space research had already benefited mankind, particularly in weather forecasting through satellites and in the relaying of telephone and television messages. His delegation supported the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) on the reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union.

8. It was regrettable that the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, though it had had useful discussions, had not reached agreement. In the United Kingdom Government's view, any attempt to deal with some of the legal questions now arising in the field of outer space would be premature, because they were likely to be affected by further scientific and technical advances and because the legal concepts involved had yet to be separated from those which were primarily of a political nature. The task of exploring the legal aspects of outer space exploration should be continued—not, however, by the General Assembly itself, but by a body suitable for quiet and detailed negotiation. The United Kingdom delegation felt that there were good prospects of progress on such matters of immediate and practical concern as the United States and Soviet proposals on assistance to and return of space vehicles and the United States proposal on liability for space vehicle accidents, and it believed that further consideration of those topics by the Legal Sub-Committee would have constructive results.

9. A more controversial topic, on which useful progress could be made by referring it for further study and consideration to the Legal Sub-Committee, was that of the formulation of basic principles governing the exploration and use of outer space. In his Government's view, the principles stated in General Assembly resolution 1721 A (XVI), while very important, constituted only a beginning. The United Kingdom's criticism of the Soviet draft declaration of basic principles (A/5181, annex III, sect. A) had not been directed toward the concept of a set of basic principles as such, but to certain elements in that particular draft declaration. Some of the new "principles" embodied in it were so closely connected with political questions of a controversial nature that they appeared to be quite unsuited to a declaration of basic legal principles. On the other hand, the United Arab Republic's draft code (A/5181, annex III, sect. E) contained many ideas which could contribute to the formulation of a generally acceptable set of basic principles.

10. His delegation also had prepared a set of draft principles—submitted in document A/C.1/879—which amplified the principles stated in resolution 1721 A (XVI). The draft affirmed that outer space and celestial bodies were free for exploration and use by all States, in conformity with international law and with due regard to the interests of other States and to the need for consultation and co-operation; and it also restated and amplified the concept that outer space and celestial bodies were not subject to national appropriation. While no reference was made to the exploration and use of outer space by international organizations, that was not intended to mean that the principles which would govern the conduct of States would not also apply to such organizations.

11. He hoped that in 1963 the Legal Sub-Committee would study the draft declarations which had been submitted, as also the question of assistance to and return of space vehicles and that of liability for space vehicle accidents. In the meantime, prompt action should be taken to put into effect the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, on which there was no disagreement.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the representatives of WMO, ITU and UNESCO wished to speak on the item under discussion. He invited them to address the Committee.

13. Mr. LANGLO (World Meteorological Organization) said that the task entrusted to WMO by General Assembly resolution 1721 C (XVI) could be considered as part of its basic function; and, indeed, the meteorological aspects of outer space activities had been under study by WMO for several years before the adoption of that resolution. The report which WMO had submitted to the Assembly had been prepared with the assistance of scientists from the United States and the Soviet Union and with the advice of other international organizations, such as the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and UNESCO; and WMO was grateful for that help. The first draft of the report had been considered and modified by a special meeting of experts, and had been approved in its final form by the WMO Executive Committee in June 1962. It should be regarded as a preliminary report, since it had not been possible in a period of six months to carry out fully the task set by the General Assembly, which involved a complete reappraisal of the atmospheric sciences and their applications. Since the report had been in the hands of Member Governments for some time, he would confine himself to certain points which had not been dealt with in detail because of the speed with which it had been prepared.

14. The report proposed that a committee of scientists should be established to advise on all aspects of research in the atmospheric sciences, and that its members should be nominated by WMO, ICSU and UNESCO in order to ensure the broadest possible representation of governmental and non-governmental work in the field. Pending the establishment of that committee by the WMO Congress in April 1963, WMO had set up a provisional group of the same kind, which had recently held its first meeting. Apart from various suggestions regarding possible lines of research, the group had made valuable proposals concerning the education and training of meteorological research workers. For example, it had recommended that all national meteorological services should engage in research work on a considerable scale and that WMO should encourage countries to pool their resources by establishing international meteorological research institutes where their scientists could work together and where meteorologists from different countries could come for post-graduate training and research. It had also expressed the view that a small number of large university research groups would be better than a large number of small groups. The results of the group's meeting suggested that the proposed committee would have a useful contribution to make.

15. It was often asked whether all countries needed to interest themselves in meteorological satellites and whether such matters could not be left to the great Powers. The answer was that all countries, and not least the new States, would benefit from progress in the atmospheric sciences and that their participation

was necessary if scientists were to make the best use of satellite observations. There were vast areas of sea in the Southern hemisphere and of land and sea in the tropics for which meteorological observations at the surface were almost or entirely non-existent. It was a great step forward to be able to observe those areas from a height of 700 kilometres or so, but if observations from satellites were to be fully utilized, a certain number of direct observations at the surface and in the lower atmosphere would be necessary. That was truly international work, which would ultimately benefit all countries.

16. In that connexion, he expressed the hope that the developing countries would join in such international efforts and that a growing proportion of the necessary personnel would come from such countries. WMO had already made considerable efforts to train such personnel through the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and the Special Fund; much more was needed, however, and it therefore welcomed the proposal in the draft resolution submitted by Canada and the United States (A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) that the agencies concerned should give sympathetic consideration to requests for assistance in that field. But the amount of assistance which could be provided from existing sources might not be enough, and the WMO report therefore recommended that the possibility of special financial arrangements should be considered. The idea had been put forward of a world weather fund, which would be used to finance the development of basic meteorological facilities and research work. It was to be hoped that those proposals would receive careful consideration.

17. WMO had established close relations with other organizations and had concluded formal working agreements with a certain number, such as ICAO, UNESCO and ICSU. It had sought the aid of all such organizations for the preparation of its first report and for future activities of the same kind, since it recognized the fact that important advances in meteorology had always been based on close collaboration between research scientists and meteorologists engaged in applied work. It hoped that future programmes for research activities in the atmospheric sciences would also be worked out as a joint effort, and that the General Assembly would give due consideration to those matters when taking action on the WMO report.

18. Mr. DE WOLF (International Telecommunication Union) drew the Committee's attention to the first report of ITU on the question of telecommunications and the peaceful uses of outer space (A/5237). The Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference to allocate frequency bands for outer space was to be held, as had been recommended by the Administrative Council of ITU, on 7 October 1963. At its last session, the Council had adopted a resolution instructing the Secretary-General of ITU to invite all members and associate members of the Union to submit, by 31 December 1962 if possible, information on: technical progress and developments in space telecommunications; subjects which they regarded as appropriate for international co-operation in order to achieve the objectives set forth in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI); and which of those subjects, if any they felt should be included in the agenda of the proposed 1963 Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference. A circular had been sent to the members of the Union to draw their attention to that resolution, and it was to be hoped that they would communicate their views on those three points to the

Secretary-General of ITU so that the Council might decide at its March 1963 meeting what proposals could appear on the agenda of the 1963 conference. The prime object of the conference would be the assignment of frequencies.

19. Problems which ITU would have to study and consider in the future included the organization of a system of outer space communications, the rate structure of such a system, and the question of who would operate it. At its meeting in March 1963, the Administrative Council would be called upon to decide which problems could be discussed by the 1963 conference and which should be considered by a telephone and telegraph conference, by the Plan Committee of the International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) and the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT), by the Plenipotentiary Conference which was to meet in 1965 to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of ITU, or by an ad hoc conference to meet at some time in the future. A plenary session of the CCIR to be held in January 1963 would also submit its recommendations to the 1963 conference.

20. Mr. GAGLIOTTI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that he wished to inform the Committee of the steps taken by UNESCO to implement the recommendations in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI) and those of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In the programme and budget he had submitted for 1963-1964, which was now being considered by the General Conference of UNESCO, the Director-General called for a strengthening of the research programme in geophysics and space science. The main objectives of that programme were to further international co-operation in basic research and to assist developing countries in making useful scientific contributions to the exploration of outer space through astronomical and geophysical observations. Specifically, the Director-General proposed that assistance should be provided to COSPAR, the interested scientific unions, and the International Astronautical Federation to meet the costs of symposia, study groups and other scientific meetings for evaluating the results of research; that assistance should be provided to COSPAR for the purpose of preparing and publishing a series of manuals on the technical requirements for optical and radio tracking of artificial satellites, telemetry reception, sounding rocket launching sites, etc.—COSPAR had already received aid in the preparation of a World List of Satellite Tracking Stations, which was now ready for distribution; that competent non-governmental scientific organizations should be assisted in the planning of international research programmes, particularly that of the International Year of the Quiet Sun; that pilot studies of the use of photographic and other data from satellites in the study of the earth's atmosphere and hydrosphere should be undertaken in co-operation with WMO, the International Council of Scientific Unions and other organizations; that the theoretical and practical problems of extra-terrestrial biology should be examined in consultation with COSPAR, the International Astronautical Federation and appropriate scientific unions; and that member States should be assisted in establishing or modernizing a number of suitably located astronomical and geophysical observatories. The Director-General had also said that UNESCO was ready to serve as a meeting-place for the exchange of ideas and information between scientists and jurists on certain of the problems now be-

fore the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

21. An important aspect of UNESCO's programme was the promotion of space communication as a means of ensuring the free flow of information and ideas. An expert committee on new methods and techniques in education had recently recommended that UNESCO should encourage the setting aside of adequate frequencies for educational radio and television services, including, eventually, artificial satellite communication systems. UNESCO planned to take up that problem at the Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference of ITU in October 1963. The report being prepared for the conference would probably also deal with the organizational aspects of space broadcasting, and UNESCO was giving consideration to the convening of an expert meeting on space communication to seek solutions to the administrative, financial, technical and even legal problems involved in the use of satellites for the diffusion of information and the advancement of education.

22. His organization planned to engage in co-operative activities with WMO, ITU and COSPAR and would continue to work as closely as possible with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

#### Organization of work

23. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Soviet representative had proposed the day before that a Committee meeting which would otherwise be cancelled for lack of speakers on agenda item 27 should be devoted to consideration of the Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.318) calling for representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops from South Korea. He noted, in that connexion, that only three speakers were listed for the next day, one for Thursday, and four for Friday. He wished to inform the Committee that he had been unsuccessful in the efforts he had made, in accordance with the decision taken at the 1284th meeting, to resolve the differences of opinion on the question when the Committee should consider draft resolution A/C.1/L.318.

24. Mr. QUAISON-SACKY (Ghana) said that since the seventeenth session of the General Assembly was scheduled to end on 21 December, the Committee should take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/L.318 in sufficient time for Korean representatives to come to New York. He therefore proposed that if the speakers on the list agreed, the next day's meetings should be set aside for a purely procedural discussion of the Soviet draft resolution.

25. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he wished to second the Ghanaian proposal. Indeed, he would go further and propose that consideration of the Korean item itself should begin the next day. The practice of various Committees of the General Assembly provided ample precedent for proceeding to the next item when there was a temporary interruption in the discussion of a given question. The initial discussion of the Korean question could probably be limited to the problem of inviting representatives. By adopting the procedure which he had just proposed, the Committee could demonstrate that it had acted in good faith in deciding to consider the Korean item.

26. Mr. ROWAN (United States of America) said he found it surprising that the Soviet representative was apparently opposed to a detailed discussion of the question of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which was of great importance to all mankind. Experience had shown that procedural discussions of the question of inviting Korean representatives were always extremely lengthy and tended to become involved in matters of substance. To adopt the proposal now under consideration would mean reversing the Committee's previous decision to complete its consideration of the question of outer space before taking up the Korean question.

27. The CHAIRMAN observed that the Committee had decided merely that the question of outer space would be the fifth item on its agenda; it had not decided that the Korean question would be taken up only after completion of the debate on outer space.

28. Mr. BLUSZTAJN (Poland) said that, since a number of interesting and important statements had been made in recent days and discussions were also in progress outside the Committee, it could scarcely be said that insufficient attention was being given to the question of outer space. He supported the Ghanaian proposal, which would save time and ensure that the substance of the Korean question was discussed under the most favourable possible conditions.

29. Sir James PLIMSOLL (Australia) said that his delegation was opposed to any consideration of the question of inviting Korean representatives before the Committee's debate on outer space was completed. Procedural discussions of the question of inviting Korean representatives usually turned into discussions of the substance of the item. It would be confusing to hold simultaneous discussion of two items. In any case it was not the Committee's practice to do so unless there was general agreement that that should be done. Moreover, it was unnecessary because the Committee was not yet under great pressure of time.

30. Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the previous day's statements by the Soviet and United States representatives had shown that the Governments of both countries were eager to co-operate in the peaceful uses of outer space; moreover, discussions aimed at such co-operation were currently being held between the Soviet and United States delegations. He therefore found it difficult to understand Mr. Rowan's gratuitous assertion that the Soviet delegation was opposed to a detailed discussion of the question of outer space.

31. Mr. ROWAN (United States of America) replied that while his Government welcomed co-operation with the Soviet Union, it should be borne in mind that the question of outer space affected all peoples and should be given the fullest possible discussion in the First Committee.

32. The CHAIRMAN said he wished to make it clear that if the Ghanaian proposal was adopted, the debate on outer space would be adjourned for only one day.

33. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) recalled that the Committee had decided at its 1284th meeting that draft resolution A/C.1/L.318 should be considered not later than at the beginning of the discussion of the Korean question. The Ghanaian proposal was not inconsistent with that decision, and might moreover save considerable time, since it might be possible to complete consideration of the draft resolution the next day.

34. Mr. PAZHWAK (Afghanistan) observed that draft resolution A/C.1/L.318 could be taken up the following day after the scheduled statements on the question of outer space had been made. The same procedure could be followed at subsequent meetings.

35. Mr. CAMPBELL (United Kingdom) said that his delegation could not agree to that procedure, since it was not desirable that delegates should come to meetings without knowing for certain what subjects were to be discussed. He was also unable to support the Ghanaian proposal. If the debate on outer space was progressing slowly at the beginning of the following week and there was a shortage of speakers, the Committee might then wish to begin consideration of the Korean question.

36. Mr. SOULEYMANE (Mauritania) said that the idea put forward by the Afghan representative was more in keeping with agreed procedure than was the Ghanaian proposal, since the Committee had already decided that the Korean question would not be taken up until the debate on outer space had been completed.

37. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said that since more speakers might be added to the list for the following day, the idea put forward by the Afghan representative seemed more practical. He moved that the matter should be decided at the next morning's meeting after the list of speakers had been exhausted, and that the present meeting should now be adjourned.

38. Mr. BLUSZTAJN (Poland) proposed that the Cypriot representative's two motions should be dealt with in the order in which they had been presented.

39. The CHAIRMAN said that a motion for adjournment took precedence over any others. He therefore put to the vote the motion of Cyprus for adjournment of the meeting.

*The motion was adopted by 45 votes to 1, with 27 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.