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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Report of the Special Political Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 43/56 of 6 December 1988.
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1989, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the Special Political Committee.
3. The Special Political Committee considered the item at its 19th to 21st meetings, on 13, 16 and 17 November 1989 (see A/SPC/44/SR.19-21).
4. The Committee had before it the following documents:
 - (a) Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; 1/
 - (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/44/469).

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

5. The Committee also had before it the following documents:

(a) Letters dated 6 and 23 June 1989 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/305 and A/44/347), respectively;

(b) A note verbale dated 21 June 1989 from the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/353);

(c) A letter dated 19 July 1989 from the Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/409-S/20743 and Corr.1 and 2);

(d) A letter dated 2 October 1989 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/44/598);

(e) A letter dated 19 September 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/44/552), to which the President of the General Assembly responded by a letter dated 16 November 1989 (A/44/745).

6. At the 19th meeting, on 13 November 1989, Mr. Petre Tanasie, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and Permanent Representative of Romania, introduced the report of the Committee on behalf of its Chairman, Mr. Peter Jankowitsch.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/SPC/44/L.18

7. At the 20th meeting, on 16 November 1989, the representative of Austria introduced a draft resolution entitled "International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/SPC/44/L.18), sponsored by Austria on behalf of the Working Group on International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the Special Political Committee, which, in accordance with the decision of the Special Political Committee at its 2nd meeting, on 5 October 1989, was established under the Chairmanship of the representative of Austria to work out a draft resolution on this item. He expressed the hope that the resolution would be adopted without a vote.

8. In the course of his intervention at the 20th meeting, the representative of Austria conveyed to the Committee the understanding reached in the Working Group regarding the conference-servicing arrangements for the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as follows:

"While recognizing the competence of the Fifth Committee, the Working Group recommends that the Chairman of the Special Political Committee invite the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, bearing in mind the substantive legal objectives of the Legal

Sub-Committee, to make proper arrangements with the Conference Services of the United Nations Secretariat in order to improve the efficiency of utilization of resources."

9. At the 21st meeting, on 17 November 1989, the Chairman informed the Committee that the following information had been provided by the Programme Planning and Budget Division with reference to draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.18:

"It is not anticipated that programme budget implications would arise were the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.18 concerning international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Activities in support of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies and of training in space science and technology and its application are programmed under section 2A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991." (See A/SPC/44/SR.21.)

10. At its 21st meeting, on 17 November 1989, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.18 without a vote (see para. 13).

11. At the same meeting, following the adoption of the draft resolution, the Chairman stated that he would undertake the necessary consultations concerning the recommendation of the Working Group regarding the conference-servicing arrangements for the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

12. At the 23rd meeting, on 21 November, the Chairman informed the Committee that he had held consultations on the above matter with the Department of Conference Services of the Secretariat and had sent a letter to the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space conveying to him the recommendation of the Working Group of the Special Political Committee, as requested.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

13. The Special Political Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 43/56 of 6 December 1988,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and of the importance of international co-operation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international co-operation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international co-operation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Gravely concerned at the extension of an arms race into outer space,

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Aware of the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to the socio-economic advancement of mankind, in particular that of the peoples of developing countries,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and application as well as in various national and co-operative space projects, which contribute to international co-operation in this field,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 2/ on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, 3/

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its thirty-second session, 4/

1. Endorses the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

2/ A/44/469.

3/ 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).

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

2. Invites States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space 5/ to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties;

3. Notes that the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its twenty-eighth session, in its working groups, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/56; 6/

4. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that the Legal Sub-Committee at its twenty-ninth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Continue the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear-power sources in outer space through its working group;

(b) Continue, through its working group, its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(c) Continue its consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and 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;

5. Endorses the recommendations of the Legal Sub-Committee on the method of work concerning the agenda item referred to in paragraph 4 (c) above, and notes that the working group will be established in 1990 and convened in 1991 in accordance with paragraph 53 (c) of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee;

5/ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/44/20), chap. II, sect. C.

6. Calls on Member States to respond promptly to the requests issued by the Secretary-General in connection with paragraphs 53 (a) and (b) of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee;

7. Notes that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its twenty-sixth session continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/56; 7/

8. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at its twenty-seventh session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly those of developing countries, should:

(a) Consider the following items on a priority basis:

- (i) United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the co-ordination of space activities within the United Nations system;
- (ii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;
- (iii) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites including, inter alia, applications for developing countries;
- (iv) Use of nuclear-power sources in outer space;

(b) Consider the following items:

- (i) Questions relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space;
- (ii) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;
- (iii) Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine;
- (iv) Progress in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme; the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation should be invited to present reports and arrange a special presentation on this subject;

7/ Ibid., sect. B.

- (v) Matters relating to planetary exploration;
- (vi) Matters relating to astronomy;
- (vii) The theme fixed for special attention at the 1990 session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee: "The use of space technology in terrestrial search and rescue and in disaster relief activities"; the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation should be invited to arrange a symposium, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the Sub-Committee's session, after the adjournment of its meetings, to complement discussions within the Sub-Committee;

9. Considers, in the context of paragraph 8 (a) (ii) above, that it is particularly urgent to implement the following recommendations:

(a) All countries should have the opportunity to use the techniques resulting from medical studies in space;

(b) Data banks at the national and regional levels should be strengthened and expanded and an international space information service should be established to function as a centre of co-ordination;

(c) The United Nations should support the creation of adequate training centres at the regional level, linked, whenever possible, to institutions implementing space programmes; necessary funding for the development of such centres should be made available through financial institutions;

(d) The United Nations should organize a fellowship programme through which selected graduates or post-graduates from developing countries should get in-depth, long-term exposure to space technology or applications; it is also desirable to encourage the availability of opportunities for such exposures on other bilateral and multilateral bases outside the United Nations system;

10. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should reconvene, at its twenty-seventh session, 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, with a view to improving the execution of activities relating to international co-operation, particularly those included within the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and to proposing concrete steps to increase such co-operation, as well as to make it more efficient;

11. Also endorses the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole, as endorsed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and as

contained in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report of the Working Group of the Whole; 8/

12. Decides that, during the twenty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space shall be reconvened to conduct additional work on the basis of its previous reports and of subsequent reports of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee;

13. Endorses the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1990, as proposed to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by the Expert on Space Applications, 9/ and urges all States to make voluntary contributions to the Programme in order to enhance its effectiveness;

14. Emphasizes the urgency and importance of implementing fully the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as early as possible;

15. Reaffirms its approval of the recommendation of the Conference regarding the establishment and strengthening of regional mechanisms of co-operation and their promotion and creation through the United Nations system;

16. Expresses its appreciation to all Governments that have made or expressed their intention to make contributions towards carrying out the recommendations of the Conference;

17. Invites all Governments to take effective action for the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

18. Requests 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;

19. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference;

20. Endorses the initiative of international scientific organizations and bodies to designate 1992 as International Space Year;

8/ A/AC.105/429, annex II.

9/ A/AC.105/421, sect. I.

21. Endorses the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that international co-operation should be promoted through the International Space Year, which should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries, and that, in that context, the training and educational capabilities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be utilized to bring about a meaningful role for the United Nations, through voluntary contributions by Member States and without any impact on the regular budget of the United Nations or the existing programme of work of the Programme;

22. Recommends that more attention should be paid to all aspects related to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

23. Considers that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, and calls for the continuation of national research on that question;

24. Urges all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes;

25. Takes note of the views expressed and documents circulated during the thirty-second session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly concerning ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes;

26. Requests the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;

27. Also requests the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to continue to consider at its thirty-third session its agenda item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

28. Affirms that the interference that satellite systems to be newly established may cause to systems already registered with the International Telecommunication Union shall not exceed the limits specified in the relevant provision of the Radio Regulations of the Union applicable to space services;

29. Requests the specialized agencies and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, enhance their co-operation with the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to provide it with progress reports on their work relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

30. Requests the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to continue its work, in accordance with the present resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.
