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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 November 1964, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. MATSCH

(Austria)

General debate (continued)

64-26822

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Mr. JACKLING (United Kingdom): The achievements of the United States and of the Soviet Union in outer space since the last meeting of this Committee have been both exciting and significant. My delegation has followed these developments with interest and admiration. Less immediately exciting but of great importance for the future has been the marked increase in multilateral and bilateral space activities during the past year. It is through such international co-operation that a large number of countries are increasingly able to play a significant part in the exploration of outer space and its use for peaceful purposes and are able to share in the benefits of space research. Let me make special mention of one example -- the bilateral agreement between Italy and Kenya on the operation of the San Marco Mobile Range. Thus one of the developing nations of Africa is enabled to play an active role in an important space project.

It has been the consistent policy of Her Majesty's Government to encourage, wherever possible, international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space. That has been our policy from the beginning of space exploration and research. It is in pursuance of that policy that Her Majesty's Government has played a leading part in setting up the European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO) and the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO). ELDO is concerned only with peaceful uses of launchers and equipment. Its objectives are the development of satellite launchers and the promotion of relevant techniques in member States. The initial purpose of the organization is to build a three-stage launcher vehicle, using a demilitarized version of the British "Blue Streak" as the first stage; the second and third stages are to be built by France and Germany, respectively, and the test satellite by Italy. The development of the down-range ground-guidance station is to be carried out under Belgian control, and the Netherlands is responsible for the telemetry links. The first successful launching of the British first stage took place in June this year and has been followed by a second one.

(Mr. Jackling, United Kingdom)

The purpose of ESRO is to promote collaboration among European States in space research and technology, exclusively for peaceful purposes. ESRO has already begun its programme by launching Skylark rockets from Sardinia in July of this year and will put into space experimental devices constructed or proposed by scientists in universities or government or other establishments of the member States. Various ESRO establishments are being built up, notably the Technology Centre in the Netherlands, a Data Centre in Germany and a rocket range in Sweden.

(Mr. Jackling, United Kingdom)

Further details about the objectives and activities of ESRO and ELDO, as well as those of another regional organization -- the Inter-American Committee for Space Research -- are to be found in document A/AC.105/L.12. As stated in paragraph 14 of the Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, this has been submitted for the consideration of this Committee.

This document, which is entitled "Review of the activities and resources of the United Nations, of its specialized agencies and of other competent international bodies relating to the peaceful uses of outer space" contains a great deal of information concerning international co-operation in the use of outer space. We believe that the Committee will find this review of considerable interest and value and that it will wish to take due note of it in its report to the General Assembly.

When speaking in the First Committee of the General Assembly last year on the Report of the Outer Space Committee, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that:

"... we hope to participate in the establishment of a global system of satellite communications." (A/C.1/PV.1342, page 71)

This hope has now been fulfilled. Her Majesty's Government which played a leading part in the European Conference on Satellite Communications, is one of the signatories of an inter-governmental agreement establishing interim arrangements for a global commercial communications satellite system which was signed in Washington in August of this year. This agreement is accompanied by a second one which contains the technical and financial arrangements for the system. This second agreement has been signed either by the Governments parties to the principal agreement or by communications entities designated by them.

A progress report upon these interim arrangements has been circulated by the United States delegation, and is now before this Committee as document A/AC.105/22 and Corr.1. It is not now my purpose to repeat in detail what is so clearly stated in that report. I shall therefore only draw attention to the following points. First, both agreements take full account of the principle stated in resolution 1962 (XVIII) that:

"States bear international responsibility for national activities in outer space ..." (General Assembly resolution 1962 (XVIII), para. 5)

(Mr. Jackling, United Kingdom)

and that:

"... activities of non-governmental entities in outer space shall require authorization and continuing supervision by the State concerned." (Ibid.)

Secondly, the inter-governmental agreement is open for accession to all members of the International Telecommunication Union. Thirdly, even if a State does not wish to become a party to the agreement, it can gain access to the system established by the agreement on a non-discriminatory basis. The agreements to which I have referred are therefore fully in accordance with the principle set forth in resolution 1721 (XVI) that:

"... communication by means of satellites should be available to the nations of the world ... on a ... non-discriminatory basis,".

I now turn to other aspects of international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space. The Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/20 and Add.1), which is now before us, affords encouraging evidence of progress already made as the result of implementation of previous recommendations of this Sub-Committee which were approved, in turn, by this Committee and by the General Assembly. I should like here to refer, in particular, to paragraphs 28 to 30 of the present report which relate to the equatorial sounding rocket site at Thumba in India and also to the recommendation which follows that United Nations sponsorship be granted to India for the continuing operation of this facility. Her Majesty's Government, in approving this recommendation, extends its good wishes to India for the success of the project.

Her Majesty's Government also approves, in general, the other recommendations contained in the Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. In connexion with part of one of the recommendations concerning exchange of information, namely:

"(a) That Member States be invited to continue to submit information annually on their activities in the peaceful uses of outer space ..."

(A/AC.105/20, page 6)

(Mr. Jackling, United Kingdom)

I should like to mention that we have just circulated a folder which gives up-to-date information of this kind as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. This shows that British participation in space research and the development of satellites is wide ranging.

I have already mentioned certain instances of this, but I should also like to refer to the success of a recent joint venture -- the launching on 27 March 1964 of the satellite Ariel II. The main satellite structure and ancillary equipment were provided by the United States, and the payload consisted of experiments prepared by scientists at British universities and the British meteorological office.

There is one other recommendation concerning exchange of information to which my delegation wishes to refer separately. The last recommendation under this heading, that lettered G, invites this Committee to consider the usefulness of organizing in 1967 an international conference on the exploration and use of outer space. We share the doubts already expressed by the representative of the United States about the usefulness of such a conference. In particular, we think that it might duplicate, or overlap, exchanges of information and views that are already taking place, and will continue to take place. There are, for example, already in existence scientific conferences, notably the annual COSPAR meetings, at which information on scientific space research can be exchanged. We are not, therefore, convinced that to convene an international conference of the kind suggested would meet a real need, and would therefore justify the considerable expense it would involve.

(Mr. Jackling,
United Kingdom)

If its main purpose would be to stimulate interest in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space and to mark the progress made in the last decade, we believe that this purpose might be better achieved by a commemorative meeting of this Committee in 1967, to which representatives of Member States which are not members of this Committee would be specially invited.

I should like now to draw attention to certain features in the reports submitted by the Specialised Agencies which appear to my Delegation to afford still further encouraging evidence of the progress made during the last year in the promotion of international co-operation in the field of outer space. The Third Progress Report of the International Telecommunication Union records the very successful results achieved by the Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference in 1963 which allocated radio frequency bands for the purpose, inter alia, of communication and meteorological satellites, space research and space vehicles in distress. We fully endorse the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's commendation of this valuable contribution to the successful conduct of peaceful activities in outer space.

The information given in the report of the World Meteorological Organization about the progress made towards establishing a World Weather Watch and related research projects, is certainly encouraging. But further progress is dependent on the extent to which Member States give it their financial support both on national and international levels and the readiness with which facilities, equipment and staff are provided from national sources. We therefore warmly support the establishment of the Development Fund without which the World Weather Watch might never have become a reality.

I turn last of all to the report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/21 and Add.1). My delegation is glad to observe the progress which has been made this year towards the drafting of international agreements on Assistance to and Return of Astronauts and Space Vehicles and on Liability for Damage caused by Objects launched into Outer Space.

In the case of the first of these drafts the progress achieved has been greater, since the subject is a less complex one from the juridical point of view. My delegation had, indeed, hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee would have been able

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United Kingdom)

to produce a unified text of a draft Convention on Assistance and Return for presentation to this Committee. Although preliminary agreement has been reached on the Preamble and on certain of the operative provisions of the Convention, there is still, however, a difference of view on other provisions of the draft Convention. My delegation believes that these differences will need careful consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee at its next session, and we therefore consider that this Committee should endorse the Sub-Committee's recommendation in paragraph 10 of its report, "that work on the remaining part of the Convention and the text as a whole be continued at the next session of the Sub-Committee".

My delegation has also noted that the Legal Sub-Committee has completed a first reading of the three proposals on Liability for Damage caused by Objects launched into Outer Space which are now before it. These proposals raise a number of questions, of an essentially juridical nature, which cannot be resolved without further study and a further exchange of views. We believe that the Legal Sub-Committee has done useful work this year in examining these problems. We therefore consider that this Committee should endorse the Sub-Committee's recommendation in paragraph 13 of its report that work on the preparation of a draft Convention on Liability should be continued at its next session.

Finally, I should like to return to the theme which underlies what I have said today. In the view of Her Majesty's Government it is essential that international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space should continue, and that no opportunity should be lost of furthering and developing such co-operation. To this end all our efforts should be directed, and we should welcome and encourage all progress in this direction.

Mr. CHAKRAVARTY (India): Since we met last year, further notable achievements have been made in the exploration of outer space. Only three weeks back, the Soviet Union launched the most advanced type of space ship. The orbiting of three cosmonauts in Voskhod, dressed in normal clothing, has been a spectacular accomplishment and has made it possible, for the first time, for a scientist and a doctor to make observations in outer space. Another remarkable

(Mr. Jackling,
United Kingdom)

achievement which roused our admiration was when the United States launched Ranger VII which relayed television pictures as it crashed on the moon and gave the most valuable information concerning the lunar surface. The Syncom communication satellite launched by the US successfully relayed the inauguration of the Olympic games from Tokyo all over the world.

Side by side, international co-operation in the exploration of outer space has been developing more and more. There has been a growing series of programmes of scientific and technical interests in the peaceful uses of outer space, such as the International Year of the Quiet Sun, the International Indian Ocean Expedition, the World Magnetic Survey and the International programmes involving the reception of radio beacon transmissions and telemetering of satellite signals. We welcome the growth of the range and depth of these international programmes, which augur well for the future. International co-operation involving a programme of research for sounding rockets is bringing together scientists from the USSR, the USA, France, India and other countries at the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station in South India. At Thumba and at the proposed satellite communication ground station, India will be able to provide unique opportunities for international co-operation and training in new fields.

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

My delegation has always felt that in the exploration of outer space it is essential to secure the active co-operation of the scientists and technologists of all countries. It is therefore gratifying to note growing co-operation in this field. The European Research Organization provides one such example. The bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union attempt to develop further co-operation between the two most advanced nations in the peaceful exploration of outer space. We believe that these talks hold promise of conferring great benefits to all mankind in the fields of meteorology and communications. We look forward to an early implementation of plans by these countries undertaken co-operatively in the field of outer space, particularly in the exploration of the Moon and the planets.

The Indian delegation fully endorses the recommendations made by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee under the able chairmanship of Dr. Martyn. On the question of harmful effects of space experiment, we support the United Nations endorsement of the recommendations of the Executive Council of COSPAR communicated in paragraphs 33, 34 and 35 of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We would urge that nations with capability of landing objects on planets should continue to use self-restraint so that the possibility of detecting life in other planets is not jeopardized in any way. We might indeed consider in what form our support to this idea can be best emphasized; namely, whether through a declaration or a resolution or an endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly. My delegation has throughout emphasized the development of a world weather watch and the progress made in this field during the year is noteworthy. We feel that developing countries will benefit if the Secretariat is able to function as a clearing house of information on education and training and if the Secretary-General publishes material on the purposes and potentialities of space activities.

The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendation that United Nations sponsorship should be given to India for continuing operations at the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station. It may be recalled that the Scientific Group visited

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

the Thumba equatorial sounding rocket launching site early this year and recommended in its report that United Nations sponsorship should be given to India for this project in conformity with the basic principles endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 1802 (XVII). The Scientific Sub-Committee has endorsed this recommendation. We hope the Committee will now endorse this recommendation so that the General Assembly during its nineteenth session may grant the sponsorship that we had asked for. We deeply appreciate the support voiced by so many delegates for this venture during this session.

The report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has also urged that due attention should be paid by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and Member countries to requests received from India and endorsed by the scientific advisory panel for assistance to undertake measures to increase the utility of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station as a place for international collaboration in sounding rocket experiments and to provide programmes and facilities for training scientists and technicians, in certain spheres to the extent that such training may be effectively utilized at TERLS or elsewhere. We welcome this suggestion. The Government of India is establishing at the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station, facilities for training in range operations, payload design, construction and testing and data processing and analysis related to sounding rocket experimentation.

We have reported to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that preliminary steps have already been taken to establish an advisory panel consisting of scientific representatives of user States. An informal meeting of representatives of the United States, USSR, France and India has already been held. Discussions are in progress with other States interested in research at the magnetic equator and it is hoped that the panel will soon be enlarged. Pending endorsement of the recommendation for the United Nations sponsorship of TERLS, we have formulated certain plans, and we hope to discuss these with the scientific advisory panel as soon as the sponsorship is formally granted.

India has just signed a contract with UNESCO whereby we shall receive assistance of about \$3,000 for conducting an international seminar of sounding rocket experiments and techniques in January 1965. We are hoping that at this seminar there would be approximately fifty participants of which perhaps fifteen would be from other countries.

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

My delegation is in favour of holding an international conference on the peaceful uses of outer space in 1967 commemorating the first ten years of man's activities in outer space. At the same time, we feel that we should ensure that there is no duplication of efforts and that we avoid any unnecessary expenditure to the Organization. There is enough time to examine the matter a little more carefully since the conference is proposed to be held three years from now. In this connexion the idea of setting up a working group as suggested by the representative of Italy in the statement he made on 28 October deserves careful consideration. This Committee may consider whether a separate working group need be set up or whether the work could be entrusted to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee for a report in 1965. That Sub-Committee or the working group, as the case may be, could go into the matter in detail and advise us as to what should be the precise aims and objectives of the conference and how best they could be realized and co-ordinated with the activities of other scientific bodies. We would then be in a better position to decide for ourselves what sort of a conference we should have. Meanwhile, the two space powers who are already co-operating in so many fields, might perhaps also give careful consideration to this matter and make some proposal which may be acceptable to all.

I would now like to turn to the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. While the declaration contained in resolution 1962 (XVIII) cannot be said to have binding legal force, it does lay down the guide-lines for the conclusion of international legal instruments pertaining to exploration and use of outer space. In this connexion, I should like to express once again the firm conviction of my delegation that there is urgent need for a declaration to the effect that the exploration and use of outer space shall be for peaceful purposes only. Resolution 1962 (XVIII) acknowledged the principle that "exploration and use of outer space shall be carried on for the benefit and in the interest of mankind". This was a good beginning last year, but we cannot rest content with that. We have to continue our efforts to achieve an agreement to the effect that any non-peaceful activity in outer space is unlawful. It is to be hoped that the Legal Sub-Committee would devote itself to this task at its subsequent sessions.

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

It will be recalled that when this Committee met in November 1963, to consider the draft Declaration of Legal Principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space, my delegation voiced particular regret at the omission of any reference to resolution 1884 (XVIII). We are therefore happy to find that the draft preambular paragraphs on which agreement was reached by the informal working party of the Sub-Committee, refer to resolutions 1721 (XVI) and 1884 (XVIII). In this sense, the Legal Sub-Committee this year has made a significant advance.

In paragraphs 2 and 3 of Section I of resolution 1963 (XVIII) our Committee was asked by the General Assembly to arrange for the prompt preparation of draft international agreements on liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space and on assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles and to report to the General Assembly on the results achieved in the preparation of the two agreements. My delegation is happy to note the progress made by the Legal Sub-Committee in the preparation of these agreements. The report of the Legal Sub-Committee, contained in documents A/AC.105/19 and A/AC.105/21 is very encouraging. My delegation would like to pay a tribute to Mr. Lachs, the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, whose knowledge and able guidance have been prime factors responsible for much of the progress that has been achieved.

As has been stated in paragraph 18 of the report (A/AC.105/21), the Legal Sub-Committee was able to complete the first reading of the drafts on liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space. My delegation, which actively participated in the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, is happy that the discussions on the drafts on liability were most fruitful and served to pinpoint the various problems connected with the preparation of a convention on the subject. There was considerable progress in the definition of certain concepts which would of necessity have to be included in the convention. For example, the concept of absolute liability for damages is now accepted almost unanimously. Similarly, there seems to be general agreement that in the case of joint undertakings the principle of joint and several liability should apply. The question whether the convention should or should not contain a clause which would place a limitation on the monetary ceiling for compensation in relation to each launching was discussed in a purposeful manner. My delegation still remains of

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

the view that there should be no such ceiling although the convention might prescribe a fixed amount for loss of life. Compensation for damage to property should be commensurate to the damage. Since the principles just mentioned would significantly add to the usefulness and universality of a convention on liability, my delegation hopes that they would be suitably incorporated in the final draft.

Good progress has also been recorded on the preparation of a draft agreement on assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles. Certain draft articles which include very important provisions are almost in their final form, and one can hope that they would soon find place in the final draft.

The questions of liability and assistance are closely linked. We are aware of the complexities of the problem and of the difficulties that stand in the way of preparing agreed texts of these conventions. We are not therefore unduly disappointed that complete agreement on the wording of these conventions has so far eluded us. It is, however, our hope that efforts would be made to reach agreement on both questions of liability and assistance simultaneously, so that the preparation of neither convention is unduly delayed.

The questions of liability and assistance are undoubtedly of interest and concern to every State. It is the hope of my delegation that all States in the world would find it possible to subscribe to the conventions either by signing them or by acceding to them. The humanitarian and material need for such wide participation cannot be overemphasized. My delegation shares the view that a formula similar to the one contained in the Moscow Test Ban Treaty might be suitable as it would permit such universal participation.

Mr. HASEGANU (Romania) (interpretation from French): The recent brilliant exploits in the conquest of outer space, which were retraced before our Committee, give us the opportunity to reiterate our satisfaction at the ever-increasing progress registered in the field of space activities.

The representatives of the Soviet Union and of the United States have drawn, with competence and authority, the picture of the resounding successes accomplished during this year through man's efforts to penetrate and unlock the secrets of the universe.

(Mr. Haseganu, Romania)

May we once again express our admiration for the successful flight of the Soviet space ship Voskhod with three men aboard. Likewise, we greatly appreciate the photographs of the surface of the moon at close range obtained by the American satellite Ranger VII.

At the same time, we note with satisfaction that to the impressive accomplishments of the Soviet Union and of the United States were added the successes obtained by an increasing number of States in the development of their programmes of space exploration.

At present, more than thirty countries are engaged in space research, thus contributing ever more substantially to the increase in our knowledge of outer space.

Romania pays special attention to space research and encourages it with all the means at its disposal. The scientific research centres of Romania undertake theoretical and experimental studies on the application of aerodynamics and celestial mechanics to space flights. Studies in depth are thus made of the physical structure of the upper layers of the atmosphere and the ionosphere, as well as detailed research in the field of space biology and medicine. The system of observation and photographic system of the satellites continue to be developed, as well as geodesic methods for cosmic triangulation.

Romania has participated and will continue to participate in international programmes of scientific and technical interest concerning the exploration and the peaceful uses of outer space, as, for instance, the International Year of the Quiet Sun.

The accelerated pace of scientific and technical progress in the exploration and use of outer space, and the ever-growing number of countries preparing to participate, stress the responsibility of our Committee for the organization of international co-operation so that all States, large and small, may benefit from these activities designed to be developed in the interest of and for the good of all peoples.

From this standpoint, we consider that the convocation in 1967, under the aegis of the United Nations, of an international conference on the problems of outer space, an idea which was approved by resolution 1472 (XIV) of the United Nations General Assembly, and reaffirmed during the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, would be useful.

(Mr. Haseganu, Romania)

The recent Conference in Cairo, in which forty-seven countries participated, also supported the idea of convening such a conference. Likewise, we consider constructive the suggestion that COSPAR and IAF -- international scientific organizations engaged in activities concerning the peaceful uses of outer space -- should participate in the organization of that conference. In our view, the convening of an international conference on the problems of outer space would allow not only a vast exchange of scientific information but also a wide debate on these problems and the adoption of useful recommendations for the future development of international co-operation in the field of the exploration and peaceful utilization of outer space.

The activity of our Committee and its two sub-committees in the course of this year can be appreciated as positive. The scientific and technical Sub-Committee has the merit of having promoted the general trend of development, in all its forms, of international co-operation, as reflected also in the report it has submitted to us. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee, contained in document A/AC.105/20, contribute to a better understanding of space activities and of the existing possibilities for expanding the field of international co-operation in scientific research.

The reports of the International Telecommunications Union and the World Meteorological Organization reflect clearly the success of their activities and open encouraging prospects for their continuation and development.

Among the recommendations of the scientific and technical Sub-Committee, as an example, we would mention the measures designed to ensure a more intensified exchange of scientific information concerning space activities and their systematic presentation, through the preparation every two years of a progress report on national activities and international co-operative activities in the field of space research, as well as a summary giving the general and complete picture of international co-operation throughout the world.

Likewise, we consider important the recommendation designed to ensure the dissemination of information concerning outer space at a level more accessible to the public at large desirous of being informed in detail on such problems, which are of vital interest to mankind.

(Mr. Haseganu, Romania)

By placing at the disposal of all countries the results obtained by countries engaged in space activities, this broad exchange of information will favour national efforts in this field and encourage the interest of public opinion in such problems. We consider that the recommendations concerning the exchange of information on education and professional training in the basic fields of the peaceful uses of outer space are useful, since they take into account matters touching particularly on the interests of Member States and their needs.

We should like also to stress the recommendations of the Sub-Committee based on the report of a scientific group of our Committee concerning the equatorial installation for launching sounding rockets at Thumba. The effort of India, which is worthy of our applause, constitutes thus a positive contribution to the development of international co-operation in the field of space research.

Finally, bearing in mind the immediate interests of our country in regard to the results of space activities, we applaud the projects of the World Meteorological Organization for the establishment of a world weather watch.

In dealing with the juridical aspects of the exploration and use of outer space, we wish to reaffirm the importance attached by Romania to such aspects of the problem, on the basis of the agreement that must exist between the development of space activities and their juridical regulation.

The work of the legal Sub-Committee has favoured the continuation of efforts for the elaboration of juridical norms concerning assistance to astronauts and to space vehicles and their return, as well as in the field of liability for damages caused by space objects. During the third session of the Sub-Committee, the main problems were clarified, positions were made clear, and in some respects there was a rapprochement of viewpoints, thus creating premises for the conclusion in the near future of international agreements, first of all in the field of assistance to astronauts.

However, the legal Sub-Committee has also a mandate to draw up new legal principles governing the space activities of States and to incorporate these principles in international conventions, together with the principles contained in resolution 1962 (XVIII) of the General Assembly. We insist on the need for giving special attention to this problem. Once again we pronounce ourselves in favour of the universality of all international conventions concerning the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

(Mr. Haseganu, Romania)

In concluding this brief review of the activity of the two Sub-Committees, we must congratulate the Secretariat on the efficient manner in which it has ensured the organization and development of their work and the manner in which certain recommendations contained in resolution 1963 (XVIII) of the General Assembly were applied.

We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express the hope that the present work of this Committee will lead to the establishment of new means of promoting international co-operation and the regulation of the space activities of States in the service of peace and the progress of mankind.

Mr. SEIDOUX (France) (interpretation from French): Since the last meeting of this Committee, the exploration of outer space has proceeded, as in previous years, at a remarkable pace -- illustrated particularly, on the one hand, by the launching of the Ranger VII and the publication of excellent photographs of the surface of the moon which it transmitted, and, on the other hand, by the complete success of the flight and return of the space-craft Voskhod carrying three persons, whose observations are sure to be of great value for the furtherance of the various techniques used in the study of space.

For its part, France actively pursues scientific and technical aerospace research, the co-ordination of which has been carried out since 1961 by the National Space Research Centre. This Centre has drawn up a certain number of programmes and is responsible for their implementation in various sectors.

One of those programmes provides for the study and construction of six scientific satellites, the first of which is designed to collect data on the characteristics of the propagation of very-low-frequency electromagnetic waves.

(Mr. Seydoux, France)

Other experiments using sounding rockets provided useful meteorologic, astronomic, ionospheric and cosmic ray information. Our research likewise covers problems of propulsion. Lastly, the programmes of the National Centre of Space Studies includes the installation of telemetering and receiving stations for information transmitted by satellites.

The variety of directions in which our research proceeds shows the interest of my country in space studies. But it appeared to us rather early that these studies would be more fruitful if one could rely upon the collaboration of organs or research workers who carry out work in the same fields in other countries. It is thus that special agreements were concluded with the National Aeronautical Space Agency of the United States, which will take over in particular in 1965 the launching of the first French satellite, with the others having subsequently to be orbited by the French launching device Diamant. Similarly, Franco-American transatlantic communications experiments televised by active repeater satellites and collaboration for a broader use of the meteorological satellites of the United States have been carried out by the two administrations.

Other programmes are being effected in collaboration with the Argentine Republic, Algeria, India and several other countries.

This desire to co-operate in space science is given expression, lastly, through the membership of my country in the great research and implementation organs, such as COSPAR; CECLES, which is also known as ELDO; and CERS, which is also known as ESRO. COSPAR is far too well known by our Committee for me to present any further explanation. On the other hand, the European organization for the development and construction of launching devices and the European space research organization are worthy of special mention here not only because France has played a special role in their establishment, but also and especially because these organs are chiefly designed to associate European countries, with Australia in the first case, in a common effort in which each understands that this could not be carried out by the countries separately. The peaceful activities of these organizations -- the construction of space-launching devices for scientific and commercial purposes, the studies of astronomy and space meteorology -- likewise commend these institutions to the attention of our Committee.

(Mr. Seydoux, France)

Lastly, France is among the ~~seventeen countries~~ that have signed the inter-governmental agreement and the special agreement laying down temporary rules to govern a world ~~commercial satellite communications~~ system. These agreements were concluded in accordance with the principles of space co-operation as defined in the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and in particular resolution 1721 (XVI), to which, as a matter of fact, they explicitly refer. As is known, this inter-governmental agreement is essentially temporary. It provides that special legislation will have to be enacted in time in order to come into force by 1 January 1970 at the latest. This agreement, which is open to all member States of ITU, is a further remarkable example of international co-operation.

As regards the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, my delegation is gratified at the high calibre of the work of the third session of that Sub-Committee. French representatives, as a matter of fact, have actively participated in the formulation of resolutions defining the goals to be reached.

Among these, I should like to refer to those which have engaged our special attention. First, there is the exchange of information collected by countries and organizations engaged in space research, the communication and comparison of which have been of great use to all research workers. There is the greatest merit in these exchanges being increased in number and in encouraging the organizations of various kinds which participate in this research to supply information on their respective activities, whether they be organs which the Committee has already requested to engage in direct collaboration, such as WMO, ITU, COSPAR, or any others whose pursuits are similar to ours, such as the Inter-American Committee for Space Research, the European organization for the construction and development of space-launching devices and the European space research organization.

With regard to the recommendation of the organization for an international conference on the exploration of the peaceful uses of outer space in 1967, we would be rather favourable to the principle of such a conference, but we consider that before deciding upon convening it, it is necessary to be sure of its real usefulness. Indeed, one should be careful that it does not duplicate the work of already existing organs, through which extensive international co-operation

(Mr. Seydoux, France)

and large-scale comparative analyses of information have already been set up.

As regards the encouragement to be given to international programmes, my Government appreciates the decisions taken by the United States and the Soviet Union by which other countries will have available to them the results of their work in biology and space medicine and to have prepared for purposes of publication a document explaining the progress and prospects of these sciences. There is no doubt that such a study will be of great value for the interested specialists of all countries.

I should like to speak now of the provisions in the report dealing with the international sounding rocket launching facilities, and especially the station at Thumba. My delegation is happy to congratulate the Government of India upon this remarkable development, which constitutes an experiment of scientific merit which today is clear to all. We hope that the United Nations will extend its endorsement to the Thumba station, thereby encouraging the efforts of India.

(Mr. Seydoux, France)

I should also like to draw attention to the interesting reports of the WMO and the ITU, which co-operate most usefully with our Committee and whose activities in the domain of space deserve to be followed. France is especially interested in the World Meteorological Watch and in the International Year of the Quiet Sun; furthermore, some of the national achievements such as the automatic transmission of images received from meteorological satellites or the international achievements such as the observations carried out in the Southern Hemisphere by means of sounding balloons are very close to the work of the WMO. Lastly, the decisions taken by the Extraordinary Administrative Conference of Radio Telecommunications have, we believe, a very great importance for the future of space research.

In the legal field, on the other hand, my delegation regrets that the reports of the Sub-Committee dealing with this question are less positive, even if they enable us to realize that the work of the two parts of the third session was undoubtedly useful.

The problems related to responsibility for damage caused by objects launched into space are certainly delicate. In particular, they involve legal concepts which are not always comparable in the different systems of law; and the work which led to the elaboration of the recently concluded agreements on responsibility in the aeronautical, maritime transport and nuclear damage domains required time, patience and great effort. The same will doubtless be true of the defining of rules of liability for damage caused by space objects.

The draft convention on assistance to astronauts and space vehicles and their return would appear to involve fewer difficult or controversial concepts. My delegation notes with interest that the elements of an agreement have been provisionally brought together with respect to a draft preamble, the notification to be made in case of accident, the methods of assistance to astronauts within the territorial limits of a contracting party, and the return and identification of space objects. We hope that during the next stage of the work of the Legal Sub-Committee that agreement can be confirmed and extended to cover the general obligation of assistance, assistance outside

(Mr. Seydoux, France)

the territory of a contracting party, the conditions for the return of astronauts, an article concerning international organizations which have effected a launching, the settlement of disputes and an accession formula in conformity with United Nations practice.

Indeed, it appears to my delegation that the studies and work of our experts, as well as their discussions in Geneva and here, have made it possible to come to grips with the problems and to see their different aspects more clearly. There is no doubt that the analyses which Governments will now carry out will foster the ripening of these questions and will accelerate their solution.

Those were the remarks which my delegation wished to make on the subject of the reports presented to this Committee for its consideration. In conclusion, I would express the hope that the effort at co-operation in the exploration of space, of which we have so many examples today, will be further developed each day and will furnish the example of a vast undertaking by men of goodwill for a better knowledge of the world around us.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no other speakers for this morning's meeting. I would request members who intend to participate in the general debate to inscribe their names in the list of speakers by 5 o'clock this afternoon. There are no speakers for the meeting this afternoon, and it must therefore be cancelled.

For the meeting tomorrow morning the following delegations have inscribed their names on the list of speakers: Bulgaria, Brazil, Belgium and Lebanon. The names of the following three specialized agencies are also on the list: WMO, UNESCO and IAEA.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.