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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 July 1973, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. JANKOWITSCH

(Austria)

- Consideration of: (continued)

- (a) Report of the Legal Sub-Committee
- (b) Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee
- (c) Report of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites

This record is issued in final form pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee in September 1970 (see Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/8020, para. 10)).

CONSIDERATION OF: (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/115)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/116)
- (c) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON DIRECT BROADCAST SATELLITES (A/AC.105/117)

Mr. SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Brazil is pleased to take part once again in the deliberations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, under your very able and skilful chairmanship.

As you summed up in your opening statement, Sir, since our last session important developments have taken place in outer space activities. All indications are to the effect that, as science and technology develop at a fast pace, new avenues in international co-operation are opened up. In this process, as the new space applications confer a truly world-wide character on outer space activities -- and I have particularly in mind the fields of direct satellite broadcasting and remote sensing -- it becomes essential to ensure that they serve the purpose of promoting over-all progress and understanding, instead of becoming a new source of friction and misunderstanding among States. For these lofty goals to be achieved, it is indispensable, first and foremost, to guarantee that the development of international law applicable to outer space activities take into due account the need to protect the sovereign rights of States and the legitimate interests of all countries, regardless of the degree of their development, economic, technical or otherwise. Peaceful co-operation in space activities should certainly promote the attainment of the common and interrelated goals of peace, international security and development.

In some instances -- and especially when practical space applications are involved -- the full and smooth utilization of fast-evolving space techniques will require the perfecting of the legal and political framework that currently governs the peaceful uses of outer space. To the questions relating to remote sensing and direct broadcasting I shall return later in my intervention.

As a developing country, striving to accelerate the tempo of its economic development through the intensive use of modern science and technology, Brazil is actively interested in the potential and practical benefits deriving from space activities. This Committee is aware of the efforts we in Brazil are

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undertaking in this promising area and of the fact that our programmes involve a substantial degree of international co-operation, bilateral and otherwise. We are confident that the investments we are making in accordance with our national priorities, particularly as concerns remote sensing and studies in the fields of communications and education, will provide us with fruitful returns. It is our belief that investments, both in space research and in practical applications thereof, will not only prove cost-effective but also contribute to the narrowing of the scientific and technological gaps currently existing in this area.

The Committee has three substantial reports before it. We shall, therefore, be required to take decisions on a variety of issues. Having in mind that this Committee is the focal point for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the decisions to be taken at the present session will to a large extent set the course of multilateral space co-operation for the coming twelve months.

For all practical purposes, two still unresolved issues monopolized the attention of the twelfth session of the Legal Sub-Committee, namely, the questions relating to the moon and the draft convention on registration of objects launched into outer space.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

The informal working group established for the duration of this session is looking into these matters in what seems to be a fair spirit of understanding and compromise. Without prejudging the outcome of the working group's efforts, my delegation will at this stage confine itself to a brief outline of its positions regarding both texts.

As to the negotiations concerning the moon, it is the contention of my delegation that any possible and productive consensus would have to encompass all groups of States and would have to contain something more than a mere reiteration of provisions already included in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

Specifically with regard to what appears to be the main stumbling block in our path, that is to say, article X of the draft under consideration, I wish to note that the text worked out in informal consultations -- and I refer to the text appearing on page 37 of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee -- offers, in the opinion of my delegation, as good a basis for negotiation as any other. It contains elements that my delegation regards as essential in any compromise; among those elements I would mention the inadmissibility of claims of property over the moon and its natural resources, the declaration of the resources of the moon as the common heritage of mankind and the commitments regarding the establishment of an international régime to govern the exploitation of those resources.

These are very complex matters in so far as they deal with rights and obligations of States and with potential benefits to accrue not only to the present generation, but also and principally to those generations still to come. In addition, as we are all aware, a moon treaty would be an important landmark in the development of international law. The features we may see fit to include in such a treaty will constitute -- whether we like it or not -- precedents for the elaboration of other international instruments. A certain circumspection thus is perfectly in order, in particular in so far as the establishment of rights and the definition of legal situations are concerned. Without wishing to sound unduly pessimistic, I would venture to say that this is one area where given the stage reached in our negotiations -- a certain pause would seem to be most beneficial in order to allow Governments more time to assess the results achieved so far, as well as the far-reaching implications of any compromise solution regarding the question of natural resources in the light of the principles at stake.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

Turning now to the other question which is under active consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee, my delegation has consistently upheld the need for completion of a registration convention, in order to supplement the liability Convention and to confer a desirable degree of orderliness on outer space activities. We are therefore pleased by the fact that the Legal Sub-Committee managed to complete most of the draft convention on the basis of the French-Canadian proposal. The two issues which the Legal Sub-Committee could not resolve, the marking and the review clauses, are being examined in the informal working group with a view to arriving at a solution capable of accommodating all interests involved. We are confident that, given the necessary political will, the working group can come up with positive results which, in turn, will enable the Committee to provide the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly with a complete text for consideration and eventual adoption. We trust that the final text will indeed incorporate effective obligations and mandatory procedures to be followed by States undertaking space activities. We should thus refrain from placing too much emphasis on optional clauses -- except when absolutely unavoidable -- because, otherwise, we may seriously undermine one of the most important objectives of international legal instruments, which is to confer predictability on international relations.

In this respect, we are pleased to note that the informal working group has already been able to make progress on the issue of the review clause and has presented us with a preliminary agreed text. We consider that the agreement arrived at on the review clause should also serve the purpose of encouraging delegations to make further efforts towards the settlement of the remaining issue, relating to the marking of space objects. Although these two questions became linked by what could be called an "accident of negotiation", it has always been our opinion that they are not mutually preclusive. In fact, my delegation is convinced that the provisions on marking have important merits per se and should not be omitted for the sake of an eventual review of the convention as a whole.

As to the context of these provisions on marking, in view of the questions of principle involved and of the differences of opinion which seems to prevail among the space Powers themselves, we believe that further consultations are still required in order that a solution capable of accommodating all interests and principles at stake may eventually be arrived at.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

The report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee indicates that useful work has been performed, both by that body itself and by its Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites. One cannot fail to be impressed by the remarkable progress made by that Working Group in its session early this year. A noticeable degree of agreement was obtained in the discussions concerning the definition of remote sensing of the earth from space and of its potential to solve specific environmental and resource problems. As might have been anticipated, less cohesiveness was achieved in the debates on the legal and organizational aspects of remote sensing, an area which involves fundamental questions relating to State sovereignty and State responsibility. As I have pointed out earlier in this statement, one can reasonably expect that during its next, and final, session at the beginning of 1974, the Working Group will advance to the point where legal and organizational problems may be taken up by the Legal Sub-Committee for further action.

These legal and organizational questions have such significant political implications that they should not and cannot be overlooked any longer. The well-established concepts of international law regarding State sovereignty and the protection of the State's territory, resources and installations against violations through the air space must be preserved and should not be superseded by new techniques in outer space. The political and economic consequences that are bound to derive from any unprincipled application and utilization of the new techniques are well known and at this stage do not require further elaboration.

Meanwhile, as the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has recommended to us, a new questionnaire should be sent to Member States. We also hope that the task force on data dissemination will be able to discharge its mandate, keeping in mind the requirements of the developing countries.

If it is true that the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites was unfortunately not able to engage in substantive negotiations, it is no less true that its just completed fourth session afforded the opportunity for some important groundwork to be done and for clarifying the positions of delegations. When it convenes early next year, we are confident that the Working Group will be in a position to start concrete negotiations and drafting, in compliance with the wish overwhelmingly expressed by the General Assembly last year, in resolution 2916 (XXVII).

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I shall not repeat here the relevant arguments which lead my Government to consider the conclusion of international legal instruments in the field of direct satellite broadcast as a matter of great importance and priority. My delegation has already, here and in other forums, emphasized the need to guide activities in this new field towards the positive goals of promoting cultural advancement and world-wide understanding. To this end, we believe it is essential that international agreements be drawn up in order to ensure that future activities in this field will contribute to the development of harmonious relations among States, to the protection of the sovereign rights of States and to the enhancement of their cultural, social and other values, as well as their economic interests.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

Or, to put it in the words of the General Assembly, to serve

... the need to ensure the free flow of communications on a basis of strict respect for the sovereign rights of States'. (General Assembly resolution 2916 (XXVII))

For our part, we fail to see that there is necessarily any contradiction between the principle of the free flow of communications and the need to set up international legal arrangements to discipline direct broadcasting, as expressed in paragraph 66 of the Working Group's report (A/AC.105/117).

Historical experience should not be disregarded when its lessons can be useful and profitable to the endeavours of the present time. Shortwave broadcasting, which has afforded so many benefits to mankind as a whole, has also been, as we all know, a source of disputes and friction owing to the régime of undisciplined freedom prevailing in this area.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century it is hard to conceive that an international activity such as direct satellite broadcasting, which may involve operations on a global scale and with many more far-reaching potentialities, is allowed to develop without the benefit of internationally accepted norms and regulations.

I would close this statement with a word of praise for the new Expert on Space Applications, Professor Murthy, for the excellent work he has performed so far. Despite the extremely limited resources, financial and otherwise, placed at his disposal, Professor Murthy has shown untiring dedication to his mission and we have reason to believe that he will be of increasing help in the years to come.

In order to illustrate the constraints under which Professor Murthy is operating, suffice it to say that his total budget is substantially lower than the cost that Brazil alone is willing to bear for the 15 fellowships we are offering in the field of space science and technology, as recorded in paragraph 32 of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's report (A/AC.105/116). It is our hope that those offers will be fully utilized and that countries having advanced space programmes will agree not only to a significant increase in the Expert's budget but also to offer in the future a number of fellowship and training courses commensurate with their financial resources and technical capabilities.

(Mr. Souza e Silva, Brazil)

Finally, like many of the preceding speakers, notably the representative of Argentina, Professor Cocca, let me voice my delegation's concern over the possibility of undue proliferation of subsidiary organs within this Committee's area of competence. It is our opinion that a certain caution will be required to see to it that the establishment of further subsidiary bodies does not entail devaluation of the role that this Committee is entitled to play as a policy-minded and policy-formulating organ of the General Assembly.

Mr. HULINSKY (Czechoslovakia): The current plenary session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space represents a culmination of the series of numerous meetings held by its subsidiary bodies. Indeed, as judged by a staff member of a Permanent Mission of one of the States Members in New York, they might have been even too numerous. Between January and July of this year there was hardly an uninterrupted period of time during which the United Nations Journal did not announce a meeting of one of the Committee's subsidiary organs: and there were even occasions when two bodies held meetings during the same day. To be frank, however, my delegation is not fully convinced that the growing number of these sessions and meetings that we have been witnessing here in New York has been equalled by an increasing effectiveness in our Committee's work as a whole.

The fact that both the activities and the programme of the Committee have been substantially expanded since the first United Nations conference on outer space in 1968 certainly reflects the increasing rate of international co-operation in this field. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has always supported the development of this co-operation in the peaceful investigation and uses of outer space and cannot, therefore, turn a blind eye to the constantly growing peaceful international co-operation in this respect. However, the fact that the number of meetings held by the Committee's subsidiary bodies has substantially increased in New York this year also reflects, in our opinion, certain -- so to speak -- difficulties of growth in the present stage of the activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, namely, duplication in the work of those bodies.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

There is some duplication that we should eliminate in order to achieve greater effectiveness in the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and its Working Group. This was clearly evident from the discussion which took place during the May 1973 session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. There is some duplication to be found also in the work of the Legal Sub-Committee and of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites. It is also our opinion that the current session of the outer space Committee too is likely to underline the unfavourable trend in this field by being inclined to give in to certain efforts to transfer the tasks which clearly fall within the competence of the Legal Sub-Committee to other bodies.

My delegation did not see any imminent necessity to convene the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites this year, even before our Committee -- which has been entrusted by the General Assembly with a new concrete task in this field -- was able to decide how it will discharge the mandate entrusted to it. If, in the interest of compromise and consensus, we agree reluctantly to go along with the idea of convening the Working Group before next year's session of the Legal Sub-Committee, we do so only with an awareness of the fact that this Committee will give the Legal Sub-Committee clear instructions to fulfil a task of such a political and legal nature as that of the elaboration of the legal principles for the use of artificial earth satellites for television broadcasting.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

The effectiveness of our work undoubtedly tends to be impeded also by the practice of accumulating the meetings of the Committee's bodies, so to speak, in time and space. It would be useful, in our opinion, to give deeper thought to the organization of the Committee's work with a view to its time-table -- I refer, for example, to this year's session of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites held after the session of the Legal Sub-Committee and before the session of the parent body -- as well as with a view to the place where these meetings and sessions are held. It is our experience that the fact that all the subsidiary bodies of the Committee held their meetings in New York, and followed one another quickly, gave rise to considerable difficulties on the part of a number of member States in preparing the instructions for their delegations to those meetings. This was true in particular in the case of the small mission in New York; this year's time-table of meetings caused us considerable trouble since we almost had to designate one staff member just to follow the heavy schedule of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

A more equal distribution of the meetings held by the Sub-Committees, as well as by the Working Groups, between New York and Geneva, as was the case in the past, would promote more effectiveness since it would provide delegations with a greater possibility of preparing for these meetings, not to mention the fact that it would enable a number of delegations to dispatch experts to the meetings.

My delegation wishes to state with deep conviction that you, Mr. Chairman, will succeed in meeting the challenges of the present difficulties of growth, and that, thanks to your skill and competence, you will prove equal to meeting some of the problems connected with the organization and planning of our work in order to increase its effectiveness.

I should now like to make some brief remarks on the position of my delegation on some of the items on the agenda.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is deeply interested in a gradual development of international legal instruments which are to create a stable legal basis for conducting new space projects, as well as for the future peaceful promotion of outer space activities to benefit all mankind.

The Legal Sub-Committee, after successfully completing the first tripartition of legal instruments of 1967, 1968 and 1971, all of which have entered into force and have been or are being signed by an increasing number of countries, has made considerable progress in the preparation of the treaty relating to the moon. Significant progress achieved in the research on the only natural satellite of earth, through both manned and unmanned objects, has created a basis for the generalization of the practical experience through the formulation of the relevant rules.

The completion of the draft treaty relating to the moon was at hand during the latest session of the Legal Sub-Committee; there was also compromise formulations on nearly all the outstanding issues, as reflected in particular in the draft submitted by the delegation of Bulgaria. The completion of the moon treaty remains thus our primary challenge. I do not have to stress that my delegation will welcome any generally acceptable compromise which would lead to the completion of the treaty. In this connexion, I should like to comment, at least in a very brief way, on one of the questions involved.

While fully respecting the efforts to ensure the establishment of an international régime for the orderly and safe development and rational management of the resources of the moon and other celestial bodies and their subsoil, our delegation is of the opinion that the resolving of such questions in regard to the moon, and even more so in regard to other celestial bodies, would be premature at the present time. Present activities have, and future activities will continue to have, an essential character of scientific investigation, while the real exploitation of resources -- if any benefits can be expected that might be derived therefrom and serve the interests and needs of different groups of countries -- remains a dream of the distant future.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

My delegation is of the opinion that the efforts towards a successful completion of the draft treaty relating to the moon would be most suitable if the relevant provision of the treaty were formulated as generally as possible and if the elaboration of the régime governing the possible future exploitation of the resources of the moon were left to special deliberations at a later, appropriate time within the framework of our Committee.

In recommending that approach to this question, we certainly realize, just as the other Members of the United Nations do, that space exploration has to be conducted in the interests of all mankind in accordance with the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space. On the other hand, it is not possible to neglect the fact that countries conducting expensive explorations of outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies must be allowed to use and consume reasonable quantities of resources that they may derive on the spot for different needs of their missions. Moreover, it should be recognized that achievements in space, on the moon and other celestial bodies open new, hopeful prospects for mankind as a whole, while States conducting such explorations, be it individually or jointly, bear almost all or the greater part of the expenses.

With regard to the draft convention on registration of objects launched into outer space, we are aware of the fact that General Assembly resolution 2915 (XXVII) equally stressed the work on that convention. My delegation would indeed welcome it if the Outer Space Committee were able to complete its work on that convention at this session and submit and recommend it in its report to the forthcoming twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

As for the task entrusted to our Committee by General Assembly resolution 2916 (XXVII), "to elaborate principles governing the use by States of artificial ... satellites for direct television broadcasting with a view to concluding an international agreement or agreements", my delegation believes that the Soviet draft convention embodied in document A/8871 represents a serious basis for the deliberations of the Legal Sub-Committee. I fully concur

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

with the opinion of the representative of India, Mr. Vellodi, that the elaboration of legal principles to be embodied in an international agreement or agreements is called for by the unequivocal mandate given to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by the decision of the General Assembly in resolution 2916 (XXVII).

In view of the fact that in the same resolution the outer space Committee is also requested to "undertake the elaboration of such principles as soon as possible", my delegation fully shares the view that we should instruct the Legal Sub-Committee, which constitutes the only appropriate body for the framing of such principles, to proceed to draft those principles at its next session as one of its most important tasks. The Legal Sub-Committee has gained enough experience in its efficient work up to now and it has proved that it is most competent and skilful by elaborating the drafts of significant legal instruments which at the present time constitute the basis of so-called outer space law.

Mr. DATCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): Since the last session of this Committee the activities of States Members of the United Nations in outer space and the peaceful application of space technology has been developing constantly. The technological means devised for the exploration of space have been further improved and new and bold experiments have successfully been carried out. The most prominent space events and exploits of recent years have already been referred to by you, Mr. Chairman, and by speakers who preceded me, and I need not repeat them. I should simply like to stress two conclusions which in my delegation's view have emerged from all this.

First, these various scientific and technological achievements merely confirm the pace of space activity, which is on a continuously rising curve. But it is obvious that international co-operation has not followed along, and here I am thinking of the effectiveness of international co-operation. If we really want the conquest of outer space and the practical applications that will flow from it to be used to benefit all mankind, international co-operation must follow the same upward curve, and specific moves towards such co-operation should closely follow the dynamic pace of space achievements. That is an essential purpose to which our Committee should devote all its future efforts.

Secondly, the promising prospects of space applications have further confirmed -- if that were necessary -- their vocation of universality, the need to organize international co-operation in this field on a planetary scale, with the active participation of all countries. Every country, whether industrialized or less developed, has a right to have, and an interest in having, access to the uses of space technology and to benefit therefrom.

Continuing progress in the field of the peaceful application of space technology confronts our Committee with new and urgent responsibilities and tasks beyond the periodic review and appraisal of future trends in space technology. In our opinion, the Committee should undertake a detailed analysis of practical aspects of the application of space technology which are of immediate concern to Member States, particularly the developing countries.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

Over the years our Committee has achieved remarkable results in its work, and in what I have just said I have in no way wished to play down the importance of its work.

At its last session the General Assembly gave us new instructions about our future work while reaffirming the two principal objectives to which all our efforts are and have been directed since this Committee was set up. First of all, the Committee is to develop and codify rules of international law relating to the exploration and use of outer space. Secondly, it is to promote and develop the practical applications of space technology, meanwhile strengthening the role of the United Nations as a centre for international co-operation in this field.

Turning to the legal aspects, I should like to note that pursuant to the recommendations of the General Assembly, the Legal Sub-Committee, at its last session devoted itself exclusively to outstanding questions in regard to the contents of the draft treaty on the moon and the draft convention on the registration of objects launched into space. It should be noted here that although further progress has been made towards solving the controversial questions, some of the most important questions still remain to be settled, and the usefulness and effective functioning of the two agreements envisaged will considerably depend on their solution. We believe it is essential to persevere in our efforts to conciliate the differences of view which still persist so that the two draft international instruments may be as comprehensive as possible and may represent real progress towards the codification of international space law.

For those reasons, Mr. Chairman, we supported your suggestion that our Committee should itself endeavour in the course of the present session to smooth out the differences of view and try to complete work on the two draft agreements. Being optimistic as regards completion of the consultations under way to this end, we hope that the two draft conventions in question will be definitive and will be transmitted to the General Assembly for adoption.

Against that background, we should now think about the future programme of work of the Legal Sub-Committee. We may note that the Sub-Committee left it to the plenary Committee to consider the question of a possible change in the priority accorded its various agenda items. For our part, we believe that

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in its future work the Sub-Committee should give priority consideration to the legal questions raised by certain practical applications of space technology -- to wit, direct broadcasting from satellites and the remote sensing of earth resources from artificial satellites. As regards direct broadcasting from satellites, it may be noted that in its resolution 2916 (XXVII) the General Assembly asked us to undertake as soon as possible the drafting of principles to govern the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television purposes with a view to concluding an international agreement or agreements.

The report of the fourth session of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites provides us with a useful analysis of the latest technical developments in this area and a thorough consideration of the legal and political aspects as well as conclusions and recommendations regarding future work in this area. In this respect, my delegation supported the recommendation of the Working Group that the body should meet again before the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee. My delegation is ready to co-operate with other delegations members of the Committee in framing principles to govern direct satellite broadcasting to guarantee respect for State sovereignty, non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and free access by all nations to the benefits of the new technology, while encouraging multilateral co-operation in this field. Similarly, those principles should set forth the obligations of States as regards the content of direct television broadcasts beamed at other States, and the responsibility of Governments for broadcasts whose contents may be contrary to international ethical and moral norms. In this way, encouragement will be given to the use of satellite broadcasting to widen the exchange of information and to raise the level of culture and education, thus contributing to a better understanding and rapprochement among nations and the development of friendly relations in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Questions related to activities carried out with the aid of remote sensing satellites are already on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee, but for want of time that Sub-Committee was unable to consider them. In the Working Group on Remote Sensing my delegation expressed the view that the

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outer space Treaty cannot provide answers to all the legal problems posed by remote sensing and that consequently there is need to establish principles and specific standards governing all activities of States in this field. The drafting of a legal régime to govern remote sensing should have two objectives. First, it should guarantee the right of every State to participate without any discrimination and on a footing of equality in activities of international co-operation concerning the application of remote sensing technology.

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(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

That objective would be matched by the obligation of States that possess and use comprehensive remote sensing systems to make available to other States, directly or through adequate machinery, data concerning the territories of those States. Secondly, it is essential to ensure the protection of States against illicit remote sensing activities which might be detrimental to their interests. This would mean that States would have the obligation to secure the prior consent of the States concerned as regards any remote sensing of its territory.

Although still in an experimental phase, remote sensing already offers possibilities of international co-operation, particularly as regards the needs of the developing countries. The very nature of remote sensing and the need to maximize its exploitation for the benefit of all States will require a broad measure of international co-operation, as I have said. Given the obvious potential advantages of this new technology, my country is interested in making wide use of it for the control of the environment and the study of earth resources. The delegation of Romania took part in the work of the Working Group on Remote Sensing of Earth Resources and approved the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of that body, particularly those concerning the study of various possibilities for international co-operation in the dissemination and best use of data obtained by remote sensing. Pending the establishment of international machinery for that purpose, we believe that encouragement should be given to co-operation between States by using existing structures at the disposal of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, with a view to assisting the developing countries, especially in the training of specialists and in acquiring necessary equipment for the processing and interpretation of remote sensing data.

Here we support the recommendation of the Legal Sub-Committee contained in paragraphs 35 and 36 of its report, while expressing the hope that the programme envisaged may be put before us at the next session of the Committee.

I entirely share your view, Mr. Chairman, as to the need to give more specific guidance to the subsidiary organs of our Committee. In this regard, our delegation considers that the activities of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should be focused mainly on measures to foster international co-operation in space activities and on drafting and implementing specific programmes of technical co-operation in space applications. We believe that the present

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programme is no more than symbolic and that more needs to be done. In our opinion, the range of activities needs to be widened and the content and volume of those activities should be increased, without increasing the number of sessions, a subject that has been mentioned here. As stressed by other speakers during this session, the United Nations, through the Outer Space Committee and with the assistance of the competent division of the Secretariat, should become a true centre for the promotion of international co-operation and co-ordination of specific activities of all the specialized agencies. My delegation is convinced that the time has come to adopt new measures to enhance the role of the United Nations in the development of international co-operation in this field, for implementing one of the most important provisions of the Treaty on Outer Space, namely the one set forth in article I, that the use of outer space "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development...".

That is a long road to travel, but what we have accomplished thus far gives us confidence. The principal criterion by which our Committee's activities should really be judged is the degree to which it helps to ensure that all progress in the application of space technology takes the form of a more direct and more perceptible support for the efforts of each country towards the economic, social, material and spiritual progress of its people.

Mr. BAYANDOR (Iran): This being the first time I am representing my country in this Committee, I should like to join others in expressing our gratitude for the excellent leadership that you, Mr. Chairman, have provided to this Committee in conducting its affairs. My delegation has often had the occasion to praise the pioneering role that the space Powers have so glaringly played in the exploration of outer space. Today, I should like to acknowledge the singularly outstanding role that your country, Austria, has played in a somewhat different, though related, field, namely, that of augmenting international co-operation in the field of outer space and in the codification of international space law. We wish you continued success in the worthy task entrusted to you, and pledge our full co-operation.

I should also like to join with you and others in extending a warm and cordial welcome to our new Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs Mr. Arkady Schevchenko, and wish him success in the fulfilment of the wide range of important responsibilities he had assumed.

Finally, I should like to thank our Rapporteur, Mr. Souza e Silva, and wish him well in his new assignment.

My appreciation is also extended to the Secretariat staff whose assistance has been indispensable for the successes that our Committee has achieved. In this connexion I should like to mention Mr. Abdel-Ghani and his dedicated staff and also to welcome Mr. Murthy, the new United Nations Space Application Expert. I am confident that the United Nations shall fully benefit from the wealth of his experience in the field of space application.

Mr. Chairman, in your statement of 25 June, you succinctly described the highlights of space exploration activities in the past year. We wish to congratulate all those States -- among them India, a developing country -- that have added through their successful space experiments to the wealth of man's knowledge. The Soviet Union and the United States no doubt deserve distinct credit for their remarkable feats. The latest in the series of these spectacular achievements was the successful completion, a few days ago, of the Skylab mission. We shared the feelings of anxiety and joy of the American people as we witnessed the vicissitudes of that awe-inspiring experiment.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

Turning now to the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, my delegation generally endorses the recommendation made in paragraph 14 of that report with regard to the application of space technology and, in particular, the remote sensing of the earth by satellites. We are particularly satisfied to note that among its recommendations the Sub-Committee has proposed a second survey of potential users of remote sensing from space through sending to Governments the questionnaire attached to its report.

I should like to make one comment on subparagraph (c) of paragraph 14 in connexion with the organizing of workshops at regional levels for the training of specialists in developing countries on remote sensing and the interpretation of images and data acquired by satellites. One problem often associated with this kind of endeavour is the scarcity of qualified expert instructors in the developing regions where such workshops are being organized. While the Sub-Committee in the formulation of its recommendation has been careful not to overlook this problem entirely, it would have been useful if a request had been made to the United Nations Expert on Space Application to assess regional capabilities for the training of experts with a view to seeking the assistance of more technologically advanced countries to make up for possible shortcomings.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

My delegation notes with satisfaction the recommendation on the establishment of a task force whose main task would be to assist the Working Group on Remote Sensing to find the best means of disseminating remote sensing data in the interest of optimum application of this space technology for the benefit of the developing countries in particular.

Similarly, the Iranian delegation endorses the proposal put forward by the United Nations Expert on Space Applications to the effect that future planning for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications be based upon long-range considerations and goals similar to the long-range planning now in effect for other programmes of the United Nations, and, in saying that, hopes that the preparation of such long-range planning will be based on the most extensive consultations possible with the Sub-Committee members.

That brings me to another comment I wish to make on the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee as relates to the Programme on Space Applications for 1974. In this programme reference has been made to geographic regions such as "the Far East" and "the Middle East". Apart from the fact that at least some among the countries belonging to those regions object on the ground of principle to such designations, it can justifiably be said that these are not well-defined geographical terms to be employed in an action-oriented programme. It is not clear to my delegation, for instance, whether a country like Iran or Afghanistan figures in the itinerary of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications, when in subparagraph (b) of the first section of the Programme visits by the Expert to the Middle East countries are contemplated.

With those comments my delegation wishes to express the hope that the report of the Sub-Committee, which is generally satisfactory to my delegation, will be approved by our Committee.

The work of the Legal Sub-Committee at its last session was marked by a valiant, if somewhat tantalizing, effort to dispose of its priority items: the treaty concerning the moon, and the convention on registration of objects launched into outer space.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

The Working Group dealing with the draft treaty concerning the moon approved the texts of six provisions. The Working Group dealing with the draft convention on registration approved the texts of a preamble and ten articles. Though its labours were not conclusive, one can justifiably say that the Sub-Committee moved far in narrowing to the brink of agreement some widely divergent views on a range of issues still outstanding.

The encouraging progress that is evident in the current informal consultations between the Working Group and the so-called mini-group bear testimony to the fact that, substantial as the points of disagreement are, their resolution is not entirely beyond the reach of the present session of the Outer Space Committee. Hoping that I am not over-optimistic in making such an assessment, I shall refrain from restating the views of my Government on these issues at this stage. My delegation, however, will continue to take part with interest, as it has done so far, in the consultations which are aimed at ironing out these differences.

Turning now to the report of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites (A/AC.105/117), my delegation wishes to express its satisfaction with the report of that Working Group, and in particular with the recommendations contained in paragraphs 77 to 79. Those recommendations, as has already been mentioned by other delegations, are the result of careful consideration, and reflect a well-balanced compromise. But compromises often lack precision, and paragraph 78 of the Working Group's report is not an exception. According to that recommendation, the Working Group would hold another session before the thirteenth session of the Legal Sub-Committee to consider and discuss the principles on the use by States of artificial earth satellites in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2916 (XVII) of the last session and make a specific recommendation to the Legal Sub-Committee in that field. This, in the opinion of the Working Group, would permit the Legal Sub-Committee to discharge more effectively such responsibilities as may be conferred upon it.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

Neither the nature of the responsibility to be conferred upon the Legal Sub-Committee nor the authority which should confer it are specified. Once the Working Group has discharged its mandate in accordance with paragraph 78 of its report, opinions within the Legal Sub-Committee, which would be convened shortly thereafter, might differ as to whether the principles to be elaborated shall have a binding character or will be simply in the form of guiding principles.

That comment is not in any way meant to minimize the value and importance of the compromise recommendation the Working Group was able to reach. In endorsing the recommendations of the Working Group, my delegation expects that a way out of this remaining difficulty will be found in the light of on-the-spot practical considerations when the Legal Sub-Committee next meets.

In this connexion, I should like to put on record the appreciation of my delegation to the delegation of the Soviet Union for having proposed the draft of a convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting; to the delegation of the United States for its valuable working paper contained in document A/AC.105/L.71; and, finally, to the delegations of Canada and Sweden for having jointly proposed the draft principles governing direct television broadcasting by satellites.

The latter draft, in the opinion of my delegation, provides a good basis for the continuation of discussion at the forthcoming meetings of the Working Group, which, we hope, will lead to the formulation of specific recommendations to the Legal Sub-Committee.

While still on the subject of direct broadcasting, I should like to refer with appreciation to the activities of the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations in this field and to the reports and information they have supplied to the Working Group. In this connexion, my delegation takes note of the fact that the UNESCO Declaration of Guiding Principles on the Use of Satellite Broadcasting for the Free Flow of Information, Spread of Education and Greater Cultural Exchange was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its seventeenth session in 1972. We concur with the opinion expressed by the delegation of the United Kingdom that our Committee should take due note of this action by the UNESCO General Conference.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

The other comment I wish to make is in respect to the report submitted by UNESCO to the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites and contained in document A/AC.105/WG.3/L.5. While highly appreciative of the report, my delegation had hoped to find more material on the results of expert missions to advise on national communications planning sent by UNESCO to some countries at their request. Iran being one such country, my delegation was naturally anxious to see in the UNESCO report a more descriptive reflection of the results of the study which was carried out in March 1972 by UNESCO on Iran's Satellite Broadcasting Project. Iran has launched a \$28.9 million model system for educational television, which covers the entire country with 10,000 direct reception stations in rural areas.

The annual operating costs, including amortization and programme material, is estimated at about \$22.6 million. With a system reaching 7.3 million students, the average per annum cost per student would be as little as \$3.10 based on the foregoing estimate.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the United Nations assistance, as well as that of its appropriate specialized agencies, to Asia will in future be more diversified to include -- without prejudice to existing projects -- other countries in that continent which have the need and the willingness, as well as the necessary infrastructure, to benefit from the educational aspects of the technology of satellite broadcasting.

(Mr. Bayandor, Iran)

Before concluding, I wish to say that we were gratified to learn through our Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Shevchenko, that the Outer Space Affairs Division of the Secretariat has been reorganized and is expected to be soon reinforced. We hope that this reinforcement will be made in such a way that it will substantially ease the concern of those among us who have pointed, justifiably, to the need for drastic and prompt action in this regard. We very much hope that the next session of the General Assembly will take a positive attitude towards this issue and thus allow the Outer Space Affairs Division to be even better prepared for the heavy programme envisaged for next year.

Mr. VAN USSEL (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, it was with great interest that I listened to the clear, precise and comprehensive statement you made last Monday as an introduction to the present session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Apart from the valuable information it contained, your statement summarized perfectly the important legal, political and scientific problems confronting the Member States today. Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the favourable follow-up which was given to your proposal to entrust to an informal working group the task of speeding up the search for a solution to the litigious problems which are holding up an agreement on a draft convention concerning the moon and concerning registration.

Allow me to express the sincere regrets of the Belgian delegation and of myself at the announcement of the departure of our Rapporteur, Mr. Souza e Silva. I have had the privilege of often being associated with him in the work of the First Committee and of the General Assembly and I have benefited from his very broad experience and from his profound knowledge of political problems such as we consider in the United Nations every year. Fortunately, he is leaving us to come back either directly or in the form of instructions to us, and we are convinced that in his new functions he will reserve a privileged place for space questions.

Belgium followed with great emotion and admiration the sensational feats of the astronauts of Skylab I. We extend congratulations to the three Skylab astronauts and engineers, who, in particularly difficult and hazardous circumstances, accomplished their mission, the results of which, I am convinced, will enhance the efforts made from earth to discover and explore outer space. On the other hand, my delegation has followed with interest the projects and the scientific and technical programmes conducted by other Powers or by intergovernmental organizations.

(Mr. Van Ussel, Belgium)

The agenda of this session envisages, on the one hand, consideration of the reports of the Legal Sub-Committee, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites and, on the other hand, the elaboration of and report to the plenary General Assembly. As regards the first part of our work, I shall at this moment confine myself to a few general comments.

The report of the Legal Sub-Committee indicates that, although considerable progress has been made in the elaboration of a draft treaty on the moon and a draft convention on registration of objects launched into space, nevertheless significant difficulties remain to be resolved and continue to retard the final drafting of these projects. It is not my intention in this general debate to enter into detailed comments on the litigious provisions of the projects, but nevertheless I should like to make a few general comments. Indeed the informal working group, in my opinion, is a most appropriate forum whereby to seek a compromise formulation.

The difficulties which we encounter stem, on the one hand, from a determination to attempt as of now to implement strictly certain fundamental principles which the General Assembly approved and which are laid down in the treaty on principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and utilization of outer space and, on the other hand, from the affirmation by certain space Powers that technical and financial problems do not permit them to meet the obligations envisaged in at least one of the projects.

My delegation believes that rigid dogmatism could very well compromise our work in the legal sphere, when we have already reached an agreement on most of the articles of the draft treaty and convention. In other words, we should attempt to identify the objectives, the targets and the priorities and subsequently adjust our positions. I believe that the Committee shares the opinion whereby the final objective or imperative is to avoid having a legal void in space law, whereas at the technical level we are entering a new phase in the discovery of the cosmos, that is, the conquest of the moon by man and the scientific exploration of the earth by satellites.

Although my delegation endorses the appeal for flexibility and the pragmatic approach, nevertheless we feel that we cannot compromise on the fundamental principles applying to the moon and other celestial bodies, as contained in the

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Charter and the treaty on principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and utilization of outer space and in the two diplomatic instruments concerning rescue and liability. At the same time as we associate ourselves with appeals for flexibility we urge the space Powers to rise above their national interests for the benefit of the world community. They cannot lose sight of the fact that the balance between the advantages and the drawbacks must be considered as an overall matter and not sector by sector. We hope that in a spirit of conciliation the space Powers will accept the principle of marking even if, in view of the technical difficulties and the financial considerations, the application of the principle should at the first stage have to go along with the certain accommodations and will not be binding except in so far as marking is technically and economically feasible. In other words, we hope to obtain, as part of the affirmation of the principle, the commitment of the space Powers to undertake without delay the necessary technical studies and an evaluation of the financial implications of marking. This commitment could, if necessary, be the subject of an annex to the draft convention.

My delegation also believes that it would be desirable for a revision clause to be included in the convention on registration. No one can contest the fact that there is a close link between the data to be recorded and the space technology which is at the height of its development. Apart from the fact that we could establish an impressive series of diplomatic international instruments supporting the relevance and appropriateness of our demand, we should nevertheless bear in mind the fact that in a field that is as new as the exploration and use of outer space we cannot today regulate the achievements of tomorrow. What seems to be unattainable today may very well in the future be a reality, and it was this precaution of revision which was taken by the first authors of air law.

(Mr. Van Ussel, Belgium)

In the same spirit of flexibility, but in an effort not to infringe on fundamental principles agreed upon, we feel that a compromise formula can be found so that the Committee might reach an agreement on the litigious provisions of the draft treaty concerning the moon.

As I said a moment ago, we should not leave a juridical void in space law and we should not allow exploration to take place outside the regulatory control of the international community represented by the United Nations.

The report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee does not call for any special comment. My delegation none the less followed closely the work of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites. Many of the Belgian organizations took part in the ERTS programme and we support the recommendations in the report of the Sub-Committee and have noted the recommendation that the Working Group should have only one session in January of next year and that, after it has reported to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, an end should be put to its mandate. We hope, furthermore, that the role of the United Nations in the field of remote sensing will be strengthened and that the Space Expert, Mr. Murthy, will succeed in the task entrusted to him by the Group concerning regional training days in the developing countries.

Belgium is one of the authors of resolution 2916 (XXVII) of the General Assembly and has taken special interest in the work and debates of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites.

Although we have certain reservations regarding the way in which the Working Group took up the question of direct broadcasting, we support the recommendations contained in paragraphs 77, 78 and 79 of the report (A/AC.105/117).

The discussions which took place in the Group confirmed the soundness of the reservations which I made in the First Committee and in the General Assembly regarding the elaboration of a single convention governing relations between the broadcasting and the receiving States of programmes televised directly by satellites. Apart from the fact that we do not have sufficient elements concerning the technical aspects and financial profitability of these

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broadcasts, my delegation thinks that our immediate objective should be restricted to the elaboration of principles. In this connexion it would express its gratitude to the representatives of Canada and Sweden for the draft they prepared, which my Government is studying with active and favourable consideration. As for the future we shall continue to give preference to either a bilateral or a regional approach in settling questions that might arise in relation to direct broadcasting. Once the principles have been considered and once we have agreed on them. I think that bilateral or regional agreements would settle the remaining problems. In any case, my delegation would at this stage like to stress the importance of establishing national and international criteria for broadcasts. The unavoidable flood of programmes broadcast from one country to neighbouring countries creates problems which can be settled only by a bilateral or regional agreement.

In order to activate and update any work done in the field of broadcasting and televising, we hope that at the session of the Broadcasting Union to be held in November in Rio de Janeiro this question will be considered with the interest it deserves. Furthermore the position of Belgium remains based on the concern to have friendly relations among countries guided by the principles of freedom of information and free circulation of ideas beyond national frontiers.

I should now like to make a few comments on the organization of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, particularly in relation to the report to be submitted to the General Assembly.

During this general debate several interesting suggestions have been put forward.

First of all, my delegation shares fully the concerns expressed by the representative of India regarding the time-tables of the plenary Committee, the Sub-Committees and the Working Groups. As I said a moment ago, I have certain reservations regarding the way in which the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites attributed to itself the power to begin the debate on direct broadcasting. Resolution 2916 (XXVII) of the General Assembly had referred the consideration of this question to the plenary Committee. In spite

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of the multidisciplinary nature of the Working Group, Belgium continues to believe that only the plenary Committee is empowered to give directives and that in any case the Working Group should not take the place of the Legal Sub-Committee in deciding on norms. We therefore support the proposal of the representative of India that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should have an organizational meeting after the closure of the General Assembly and before the convening of the Sub-Committees and the Working Groups.

My second comment is that there should be greater discipline in the work of the organs dependent upon the Committee on Outer Space. Allow me to clarify my comment by recalling that the elaboration of principles on the detection of the resources of the earth by satellites was the subject of working documents or recommendations on four different occasions. While the French document was put before the plenary Committee, that of the Soviet Union was introduced in the Legal Sub-Committee.

(Mr. Van Ussel, Belgium)

Furthermore, the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee recommends that the Secretary-General should undertake a study of this matter using a questionnaire aimed at helping the Working Group on Remote Sensing. I think that that clearly illustrates the need for a wiser distribution of jurisdictions and a more orderly timing of our work.

The third comment which comes to mind relates to what you, Sir, have called a proliferation of subsidiary bodies. This is an important question, particularly for the small and medium-sized countries. You recalled with legitimate pride that, during the first half of this year, the deliberations of the organs of the space Committee required 65 working days. If we add the 15 days envisaged for the debates of the plenary Committee, we reach the figure of 80 days -- that is, almost three months. We should not lose sight of the fact that experts representing countries here or in Geneva must also attend meetings of other bilateral and intergovernmental bodies. The question of proliferation of subsidiary bodies should therefore be studied in depth in the light of a better definition and better understanding of the options of space policies in our Organization.

My final comment relates to the enlargement of the space Committee. This should be considered within the framework of what I have just said regarding reorganization and redefinition of the Committee's options. Before welcoming new members we should put our house in order so that the new-comers would not be frightened by the complexity of the tasks before them. Perhaps the General Assembly could recommend that our Committee undertake a study and formulate concrete proposals concerning the enlargement of the Committee for the twenty-ninth session.

I wish briefly to define Belgium's general position regarding the items on our agenda. Since the establishment of the Committee my country has been very active in space work, particularly in the legal field. Professor Vrancken has done tremendous practical and diplomatic work in this field. We in Belgium have been encouraged by the effective direction and the broadness of spirit of the line of Austrian Chairmen that we have had.

The treaties and conventions that have already been concluded, the drafts that are now being worked upon and the work in the field of remote sensing of the earth by satellites unquestionably represent a new treasure for the great Austrian nation.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that there are still four speakers listed for this morning, but we shall hear one more speaker, the representative of France, and then adjourn the meeting; the others will speak first at the afternoon meeting.

Mr. CHARVET (France) (interpretation from French): In its earlier statements my delegation has made known its position on the treaty concerning the moon and on the registration of space objects. Today we would like to inform the Committee of our position on the other items on our agenda.

I shall begin with direct broadcast by satellites because this is an important question that has already long been a source of concern, not only to my Government but also to the majority of Governments of United Nations Members. France like the USSR -- which has since submitted a draft on this subject -- was one of the first countries to draw the outer space Committee's attention to the importance of providing international regulation for direct satellite broadcasting in order to avoid the development of this new space technology, so beneficial in principle, becoming a source of tension and conflict.

Buddhist teaching says somewhere that words can destroy a nation; but we all know that the impact of images is infinitely more penetrating than that of words, which today can be carried across frontiers by radio. Thus, back in 1970, in the course of a session of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites, my delegation submitted a working document on the principles which, it seems to us, should be established with a view to formulating an international convention in this area. The danger of an uncontrolled development of direct broadcasting is felt by a great majority of the States Members of the United Nations, and the French delegation had the satisfaction this year of seeing that certain States which used to find premature our desire to see general principles adopted now share our opinion.

The representative of Egypt in his recent statement asked the Committee to ponder the political dangers of uncontrolled direct television broadcasting. I recall having quoted in 1970 a distinguished United States space expert who, in a lapidary formula, suggested that by television moulding the opinions of a politically weaker country, a strong country could win a war without firing a single shot.

The French delegation also demonstrated the dangers of television advertising on markets of States covered by satellites. I think I compared that uncontrolled television advertising with the role of an elephant in a china shop. So we warmly welcome the Canadian and Swedish initiative in submitting their valuable document at the last session of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites. That document offers us a suggestive panorama of present and future prospects for direct broadcasting. One of its main merits is, we believe, in stressing the capital role of ITU in developing this new space technology and reminding us that that international agency had already committed itself, long before we did, to an attempt at providing regulations involving certain necessary restrictions entailing a useful modification in the principle of freedom of broadcasting to which we remain attached.

My delegation also thanks Canada and Sweden for proposing for our reflection a draft declaration of principles which tackle the thorny problem of a spill-over and resolves this other difficult problem of prior authorization through co-operation on a footing of equality and non-discrimination which the space Treaty makes our duty.

(Mr. Charvet, France)

For it is perfectly obvious that when we undertake an enterprise of co-operation, we must in advance agree both on the interested zones and on the time-tables or the contents of the programmes. We therefore approve as a whole the draft declaration of principles and also the rest of the document, while nevertheless reserving the right, when it comes up for discussion, to offer certain minor amendments which do not concern the substance.

My delegation is more than ever convinced that we need to proceed rapidly in this field of direct broadcasting, even if, as the document submitted by the United States delegation suggests, there is as yet no project for direct satellite broadcasting to individual receivers. I myself was very much impressed to find at the last Le Bourget air-show a brochure -- which I am afraid I did not bring with me -- a prospectus, put out by a large commercial company that already proposes to market adapters whereby individual receivers could pick up satellite broadcasts. Even if it was only a question of community reception, this is tremendous progress over our first meetings in 1970 when we were dealing with this subject.

Last year a major French weekly, in its copy of 12 November 1972, reproduced the declaration of one of the Vice-Chairmen of COMSAT. This highly qualified figure stated -- this is more or less what he said word for word:

"Technically, direct television broadcasting without relay between satellite and individual receivers is ready to go, but we are refraining from pushing its development because we are only too well aware of the political stir that this would create."

It is precisely in order to avoid this political stir that the Committee should press the study of this problem as rapidly as possible. My delegation, consequently, considers that the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites should meet before the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee and not after. My delegation asks the Committee to instruct the Legal Sub-Committee to undertake the study of these principles in any event at its next session.

(Mr. Charvet, France)

If the convention on the registration of space objects and the treaty on the moon are not completed this year, their study will obviously continue as a matter of priority. But we ask that in any case priority also be given to direct broadcasting so that the legal debates on this question may be undertaken starting in 1974.

My delegation, like the Working Group, thinks that exchange of information on world events would foster a dawning international confidence characterized by greater understanding and tolerance; in stepping up our own work we shall more rapidly attain this objective, which I am sure is desired by all delegations.

If my delegation has today somewhat emphasized the possible dangers of direct broadcasting, it must not nevertheless be concluded that we are pessimistic. Quite the contrary. We share the deep conviction of other delegations which have the highest hopes for mankind from the development of this space technology. But it is precisely because we are aware of all the benefits that direct broadcasting can bring that my delegation is concerned that there should be harmonious and effective development of this technology, without encountering the obstacles that would inevitably arise in its path if it were to flout State sovereignty or the interests of States covered by satellites.

That brings me now to the reports of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. The document submitted by the United Kingdom delegation on the future role of this Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/C.1/L.54) has turned out to be very useful, since it led delegations to question themselves as to the future programme and work methods of that organ of the Committee. Most delegations, I believe, would like to see the Sub-Committee continue, although addressing itself to more specific tasks. It is now for the Committee to decide. My delegation would like to say that it will go along with the majority view. Nevertheless, we feel that the two groups on direct television and radio broadcasting did a great deal of good work. We also believe that the possible appointment of other groups cannot be ruled out a priori.

(Mr. Charvet, France)

We would like to repeat, however, what we already said in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee: namely, that any maintenance or strengthening of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee seems to us incompatible with a proliferation of groups, because the multiplication of sessions -- originally two weeks a year, I believe, were intended to cover the technical field -- poses for certain countries like my own serious problems of budget and staffing. So that if these groups were to be excessively multiplied, assuming the Committee can itself appoint them directly, the question would then arise whether the principle of the annual and automatic meeting of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would remain necessary. This is a problem of balance that the Committee will, I am sure, settle at this session.

Regarding remote sensing from satellites, my delegation believes that it is a matter of urgency in this field to press for early international regulation, because the development of this technology, like television, touches upon State sovereignty. That is why, like the USSR, we have submitted principles that we believe could or should be established in this area. We hope that the consideration of these principles will soon make it possible for the Legal Sub-Committee to start considering a draft international convention.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to associate itself with delegations which have drawn the attention of the Committee to the drawbacks of a concentration in New York of all sessions concerning space. For practical reasons, as well as reasons of principle, we would rather see a fairer equilibrium instituted regarding sessions between New York and Geneva. In the immediate future we would like to see the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites, if it is to meet, meet in Geneva, and the Legal Sub-Committee too, with the backing of all the necessary Secretariat staff. We would like to see it meet some time before the annual session of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.