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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 22 June 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. CANALES (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, my delegation wishes to express its pleasure at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, again conducting the business of this Committee. We are convinced that your knowledge of the subjects under discussion and your recognized experience in the field will ensure great progress in our work on the agenda items for this session.

At the same time we should like to thank Ambassador Wyzner and Mr. Carver who have worked so efficiently to ensure that the discussions in the subsidiary organs were fruitful. We should also like to thank the staff of the Outer Space Affairs Division and the Legal Department which have always given us their full co-operation.

Before making reference to this Committee's work, my delegation would like to congratulate those countries which have achieved fresh successes in space research and technology, in particular the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the European Space Agency. We consider that, with the development of new and more efficient technology and research methods, we should also have new forms of co-operation and assistance, so that all countries can derive advantage and benefit from advances in the exploration and use of outer space.

We state again the importance of establishing permanent links of co-operation between the countries that have acquired advanced space technology and the developing world. Chile's experience in this area clearly shows the usefulness of space technology and science in many fields.

(Mr. Canales Chile)

Briefly, we may mention that the Chilean Institute of Natural Resources has in remote sensing an input of enormous value for the studies it is carrying out throughout the national territory. For those studies, it can rely on teams and equipment that enable it to conduct photographic examination of multiband images obtained by satellites.

The Ministry of Public Works uses data collected by satellite both for hydro-meteorological studies and to determine land use.

The State University of Technology is carrying out activities related to the use of remote sensors in urban analysis, water structures through multiband spectra obtained by ERTS-1 satellites and climatology projects for the protection of the environment.

The Catholic University of Chile has carried out two kinds of fundamental research in space-related fields, namely, the study of earth-solar relationships through climatic factors connected with solar magnetism and studies on the luminosity of variable red stars.

Finally, the University of Chile, through the NASA Division, is operating and maintaining a tracking station for space flight in the zone of Peldehue which provides operational back-up to manned and unmanned spacecraft belonging to NASA or to countries with which that agency is collaborating in space exploration.

With reference to the work of the Committee and its two Sub-Committees, the Chilean delegation has listened with great interest to the introductory statement that you, Mr. Chairman, made, and fully shares your views. It is for that reason that it has seemed appropriate to us to stress some basic criteria according to which this body's work should be carried out. We think it appropriate and timely to repeat them because they sum up our position on the various items being discussed or to be discussed in the future.

Outer space, the moon and other celestial bodies and their resources are the common heritage of mankind, and therefore, as provided for in the 1967 Treaty, their exploration and exploitation must be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, regardless of their degree of scientific and economic development, and this is incumbent on all mankind. We consider that, if this principle is not duly taken into account, the gap between the countries possessing space resources and technology and those not possessing them will grow ever wider.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The greater the advancement and sophistication of resources and technology for the use of space the greater the consideration that should be accorded to respect for the general principles of State sovereignty, together with the need for the full application of the principle of the international responsibility of States for the activities they carry out in space. Furthermore, we believe that it will be very difficult to establish solid and reliable contacts for co-operation unless countries are prepared to hold consultations and to co-ordinate the activities that involve their respective territories or territories that lie between them.

The benefits should be made increasingly available to all, channels of co-operation set up, bilateral and regional agreements concluded and co-operation and assistance among all States promoted.

The United Nations must play an increasingly important role as the co-ordinating factor, a role that will not only make possible the holding of discussions on this matter and the channelling of information, but will further extend the functions of co-operation, responsibility and assistance that it already carries out in this field.

Further emphasis must be given to the readjustment of some rules and regulations in the establishment of new legal bodies which would enable us to make progress in step with technology and to add new provisions to existing bodies of law when circumstances so require.

Incentives should also be given for the establishment of new and better means of information and the transfer of data which may permit a balanced use of all the benefits that may be derived from space science and technology.

At all costs we must avoid at once any arms race in space since, as technological achievements in space increase, space may become yet another race track for those Powers seeking military supremacy. In this respect, we appreciate initiatives, such as that of Italy, that have been taken in submitting to this Organization legal texts to supplement existing regulations on the prohibition of the use of space for military purposes. That kind of action shows effective concern for the maintenance of international peace and security. In any case, everyone should at all times bear in mind that the provisions of article IV of the 1967 Treaty impose an extensive obligation on all countries in this regard.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The need to hold a United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be considered a general rule. Such a conference should be convened at least every 10 years, and stress should be laid on the search for new channels of co-operation, on the dissemination of advances achieved and on the evaluation of legal principles and regulations drawn up with reference to outer space.

Permanent incentives should be provided for horizontal co-operation between countries with the aim of combining efforts and exchanging capabilities in regional programmes that would make of that co-operation a useful contribution to development.

With reference to the subsidiary bodies, we should like to make brief reference to the most relevant topics in which this Committee could make fresh progress at this session.

The study by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space is of fundamental importance to our country.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

We consider that the advances made at the last session of that body with reference to safety in the use of such sources, the protection of human beings and the environment against radiation, the forecasting of re-entry and the notification required should be supplemented by the initial study of the legal implications of these matters in the appropriate Sub-Committee. In this connexion we hope that the Committee can reach a consensus and recommend to both Sub-Committees that they should study the aspects of the use of nuclear power sources in space with which they are concerned.

I turn now to preparations for the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Use of Space for Peaceful Purposes. We think that that is the body that should identify the means through which all progress in space technology should be made available for the benefit of all. At the same time, there should be no exclusion of the possibility of making progress in the discussion of any of the items considered by the two Sub-Committees.

With reference to the matters taken up by the Legal Sub-Committee, my delegation regrets that at its last session it was not possible for that Sub-Committee to attain agreement on some texts that have been worked on for years. We hope that, using the criteria we have mentioned, the solution of these problems can finally be achieved, because they are hampering the elaboration of principles relating to remote sensing, direct television broadcasting and transmission, and a draft moon treaty. In this respect my delegation will welcome and actively participate in any attempt to achieve new progress at this session.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I should like to say that my delegation agrees with the ideas you put forward at the opening meeting of this session to the effect that we need a new outlook on the work of this Committee and need to consider the possibility or appropriateness of concentrating our efforts on matters on which agreement is most likely, and, if that is not possible, that we should review positions that have been repeated year after year on the various items.

Mr. KALINA (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, first of all allow me to express my delegation's satisfaction at having the opportunity again to see in the responsible post of Chairman of our Committee Mr. Jankovitsch, a seasoned diplomat.

At the outset I should like to draw attention to the fact that in a relatively short period of time, 20 years, activities in the exploration and use of outer

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

space have become an inseparable part of scientific and technological progress, which in all of its aspects has substantially influenced the very existence and the further development of civilization. Aware of the fact that scientific and technological progress has inevitable consequences in foreign policy and consequently in international relations and mutual co-operation among those involved in those relations, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic proceeds from the premise that the further favourable and mutually beneficial development of co-operation in matters concerning outer space depends upon the further strengthening and expansion of détente in all areas of international life. There is no doubt that this primarily concerns disarmament, or, to put it better, the need to extend the process of détente to the military field.

The growth rate of space technology and the constantly expanding and deepening areas in which it is applied promote a situation in which the use and exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes has become one of the most dynamically developing links in today's international multilateral co-operation. Along with questions concerning the use and protection of the resources of the world's oceans, the protection of the environment, the fight against the most widespread communicable and dangerous diseases afflicting mankind and so on, the problem of the exploration of outer space and utilization of the results achieved in such exploration is one of the vitally important problems affecting the entire world. It is one of the problems the complex, rational, generally acceptable and, in the future, long-term solution of which not only can but must be based on principles of broad international co-operation and principles of international law that are generally accepted and have already been tested in international life. This axiom is all the more relevant because - as distinct, for example, from the situation in the exploration and use of the resources of the world's oceans - in the case of the exploration and use of outer space there has for more than 10 years been in force a legal document that has been tested in practice and has proved itself. That document has given answers based on principle to the most important questions concerning the possible legal regulation of any given area of co-operation in outer space.

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

The vitality of the provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space has undoubtedly been demonstrated. Even if there are in the Treaty some questions that are not dealt with in detail, it is necessary to be guided by the general principles that represent the heart and soul of the entire document and indicate the principled road to the solution of any extremely important question that the international community may have encountered thus far in this area.

Practically every year at the beginning of the work of this Committee - and, by the way, this year is no exception - we hear the States members of the Committee informing the international community of more and more new successes they have achieved in the exploration and use of outer space. In this connexion the delegation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic notes with satisfaction that an outstanding characteristic of the growing internationalization of co-operation in outer space is precisely its peaceful character and the striving truly to use the results of that co-operation on the broadest possible scale for the good of all States and all the peoples of the world, for the good of all mankind.

Allow me to take this opportunity to mention successes in regional co-operation among the socialist countries in this field. We feel they provide an example of how international co-operation on a world-wide scale, or almost world-wide scale, should look in the very near future. In this connexion it is necessary to note that the co-operation of the socialist countries within the INTERCOSMOS programme is at this stage not merely regional in the primary sense of the word.

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

The participation of Cuba and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in this programme, which is legally based on the fact that they are parties to the Moscow Treaty on the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes, dated 13 July 1976, gives the programme a truly intercontinental flavour.

The joint activities of the socialist countries in the area of the exploration of outer space are being carried out on the basis of an international agreement and thanks to the decisive and ever broader support and assistance of the Soviet Union. Incidentally, they also take into account the capacities, the needs and interests of each individual member country of that programme and are in our view a truly eloquent testimony and proof of the kind of basis on which we should establish this type of co-operation on a world-wide scale.

No doubt, all will remember well the month of March 1978 when the age of manned space flights entered a qualitatively new stage. We saw the first international crew, Gubaryev and Remek orbit the earth. Right after that, a crew of citizens of the USSR and the German Democratic Republic went into orbit and then a Soviet and Polish crew. The presence of citizens of several socialist States in outer space not only made a positive contribution to the cause of implementing the goals of the INTERCOSMOS programme, but also demonstrated the high level of effectiveness and the scale of the co-operation among the socialist countries as a whole.

I take advantage of the opportunity which has been given to me to congratulate the Soviet and Bulgarian delegations on their recent joint Bulgarian/Soviet flight. At the same time, I should like to tell them how delighted we are at the courage and skill of the Rukavishnikov/Ivanov crew. The Soviet/Bulgarian space mission has taken a well-deserved place among flights made by earlier international crews and has made a contribution to the goal of enriching experience in this extremely demanding area.

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

In the next few years, we shall see participants in international crews coming from other socialist countries which are participating in the INTERCOSMOS programme - the Hungarian People's Republic, Cuba, the Mongolian People's Republic and the Romanian Socialist Republic. The Czechoslovak delegation notes with special satisfaction that in Star City training has already begun for citizens of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, a country which has undergone severe trials but which has never been crushed. But it is necessary to note that the training of international crews and their participation in space flights represents just one area of co-operation within the INTERCOSMOS programme. Since the delegations of other socialist countries have already spoken or will speak about their participation and the successes they have had in the process of carrying out that programme, I should like to mention, albeit briefly, that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic too, again thanks to the aid of the Soviet Union, at the present time has a space object in outer space. I am referring to the MAGYON research satellite. Thus, the participation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the exploration and use of outer space has taken a further step forward.

In the second part of my statement, I feel that it is necessary to touch even if tangentially, upon some of the questions which are on the agenda for our session. If we compare the results obtained during the work of the sixteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee with the results of the activities of the eighteenth session of the Legal Sub-Committee, we can only observe that the work of the Legal Sub-Committee for several years now has been in a state of stagnation.

On the basis of past experience, one might add further that in this case, unfortunately, we cannot really talk about a slowdown in the rate of work resulting from substantial difficulties arising in the consideration of individual problems. Such slowdowns frequently are unavoidable and are helpful. I repeat, however, that in this case of the Legal Sub-Committee, we are talking about something quite different. A situation has arisen which threatens to turn into - and has partially already turned into - an endlessly repetitive discussion of one and the same question.

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

The Czechoslovak delegation understands the difficulty, the complexity and the sensitivity of practically all the questions being studied by the Legal Sub-Committee, but we think that in spite of that unquestionably the main reason preventing any progress is not to be found in the inability essentially to solve all problems either in legal terms or in technical terms. During the work of the Legal Sub-Committee a sufficient number of well-thought-out, reasonably and clearly-worded proposals have been made on legal and technical compromises which have been of great interest, but unfortunately, we stopped there. It is our opinion that the reason for the stagnation in which the Legal Sub-Committee now finds itself must be found in the lack of political will of some States with respect to reasonable and generally acceptable compromises. Therefore, it is quite clear that only a change in the political approaches and a sufficient amount of political will can revitalize the work of the Legal Sub-Committee and guarantee the completion of drafts which have been worked out over many years.

Experience in earlier work in the Committee - that is the parent Committee - and in both Sub-Committees makes it clear that really difficult questions not only of a political but also of a legal or technical nature - for example, the question of liability for damages caused by activities in outer space - can be successfully solved if there is the same amount of political will.

However, we cannot consider that a one-sided aspiration to include in treaty documents often unclear and ill-defined points of view and conceptions taken from other areas of international relations, represents such a manifestation of political will. It is our opinion, and we stick to it, that we must look at such things realistically without excessive emotion and in a broader context. Only such an approach will allow us to make a specific forecast of further developments and at the same time enable us to select the most appropriate possibilities for further activities.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize in this statement that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has considered and continues to consider that the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space provides a significant multilateral international forum in which to co-ordinate human activity in the exploration and use of outer space. It is our opinion that it is highly desirable

(Mr. Kalina, Czechoslovakia)

for the Committee and its two Sub-Committees to retain their nature as truly efficient bodies for international co-operation in space. Czechoslovakia will do everything that is incumbent on it to make that possible.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for the kind words he addressed to Mr. Jankowitsch.

Mr. CORREA DA COSTA: Mr. Chairman, may I express my delegation's sincere satisfaction at being able to participate in this twenty-second session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I feel quite confident that under the experience and inspired leadership of the Chairman we will manage to make substantial headway in our work.

(Mr. Correa da Costa, Brazil)

I should also like to express, once again, our deep appreciation for the skill demonstrated by Mr. Wyzner of Poland and Mr. Carver of Australia in guiding the proceedings of the Legal and Scientific and Technical Sub-Committees.

Our gratitude goes as well to the United Nations Secretariat, in particular to the Outer Space Affairs Division and the Legal Department, for providing their most valuable contribution to the advancement of our labours.

I need not elaborate here on the well-known importance my Government attaches to the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful utilization of outer space.

Space activities have now gone beyond the merely exploratory and experimental phase of pioneering days. We have entered the stage of practical application, increasing economic returns and ever larger benefits to be derived from space ventures. The development of these activities concerns humanity as a whole and international co-operation in this field should be implemented without distinction between States, whatever their degree of technological, scientific or economic development. In fact, we could even say that, in most cases, space applications are of special interest to developing countries, because their particular problems which can be mitigated by the benefits derived from these very new technologies.

But we should also keep in mind that the ever quickening pace of the development of space science and technology cannot, in itself, bring about the necessary ordering of the activities of States in this domain. This is where we, as the focal point for international co-operation in space matters, should come to the fore, so as to ensure that as activities in space progress there will be corresponding progress in the necessary extension of the rule of law to space. Although space activities take place far away from us, they are of direct consequence to men and Governments on earth. In this sense, space Powers have a special responsibility in ensuring the orderly and safe development of their activities in this field, respecting the legitimate interests, sovereign rights and safety of other States.

The importance of establishing a strictly peaceful and safe utilization of outer space cannot be too strongly emphasized. We are among those who feel deeply disturbed when confronted with the prospect of the extension of the arms race to the extraterrestrial sphere. The development of new weapon systems for use in

(Mr. Correa da Costa, Brazil)

outer space should be correctly interpreted as a deliberate step in adding a new dimension to the arms race, in contravention of the spirit and letter of the Outer Space Treaty and all sincere efforts in the field of disarmament.

States have attained different levels of capability in relation to outer space utilization. This circumstance, however, should not lead us to condone the occupation, use or exhaustion of resources, which are the common heritage of all mankind, for the benefit of only a few. We certainly most strongly oppose the notion that freedom in the exploration and use of outer space, a principle enshrined in the 1967 Treaty, should be interpreted as a rule giving special rights to first comers.

Let me now turn briefly to some specific points on our agenda, on which at this stage my delegation would like to make some remarks.

It is the sincere hope of my delegation that we shall shortly be in a position to agree on the few remaining issues that block the conclusion of negotiations on the important issues of remote sensing, direct broadcasting by satellites and the Treaty on the moon and other celestial bodies. I need not elaborate on our known position on each of these items, which have been under consideration by the Committee for some time now. In all these questions the difficulty seems to stem from the confrontation of positions on mainly political, not technical, grounds. We should reflect on the great political issues that underlie that absence of progress on these matters and try to gain some perspective on the seldom discussed but essential problems of the present and future characteristics of the distribution of power in the use of outer space.

An item which will need considerable study and on which we are making progress is the second United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We believe that the main purpose of this Conference should be the finding of ways and means to make possible for all countries, especially the developing ones, the full use of space technology for their benefit, in the hope that the rapid development of space technology by some will not contribute to the enlargement of the already existing gap between developing and developed countries. In this sense, we are strongly in favour of holding this Conference in a developing country.

(Mr. Correa da Costa, Brazil)

Another subject which merits more of our attention is the question of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. We hope that this very important matter will be considered from the legal stand point as well, in the appropriate Sub-Committee.

We are equally concerned, as are other delegations, about the necessity of evaluating the safety aspects of space missions on a level which would include careful consideration not only of technical aspects, but also of legal and political criteria for dealing with possible damages resulting from events such as the imminent fall of SKYLAB.

Some discussion is taking place, in the context of agenda item 4, on the related questions of the definition or delimitation of outer space and the geostationary orbit. Without anticipating our future statements during the specific discussions on these subjects, let me just state that we deem it very important for us to arrive, at an early date, at a political delimitation of outer space. I shall not repeat here in detail our position on the question of the utilization of the geostationary orbit. Suffice it to say that we deem it necessary that "first come, first served" practices should not govern the use of this important, finite, natural resource, of interest to all mankind. We should urgently try to establish an internationally agreed specific régime for the use of this orbit, because of its sui generis characteristics and of the quite definite prognosis for saturation within the next few years.

Mr. ALBORNOZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to begin my first statement at this twenty-second session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by expressing my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over our work once again with your characteristic skill and efficiency. We should also like to express our gratitude for the exemplary and continuing co-operation of the Outer Space Affairs Division.

I consider it my duty to inform the Committee of an event which took place and which is closely related to sub-items (c) and (f) of agenda item 4, namely, the recent meeting of the equatorial countries on the geostationary orbit which was held at United Nations Headquarters on 15 June.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

At that meeting of the 10 countries through which the equator passes, which was convened at the invitation of Colombia and Ecuador, the States which attended received an invitation from the Government of Ecuador to attend a second meeting of the equatorial countries in Quito at the end of this year. That invitation was accepted by the participants and will be made official by the Foreign Ministry of Ecuador.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

For this purpose, the text of a possible convention of the equatorial countries was distributed for consideration and possible adoption at the Quito meeting.

The equatorial countries decided to maintain contacts and hold consultations in order to co-ordinate action both in New York and Geneva. The participants exchanged views on the legal and technological aspects of the geostationary orbit.

With reference to the study of matters related to the geostationary orbit, Ecuador wishes to state for the record that its position on the unique and finite natural resource formed by this orbit is permanently based on the principles laid down in the Bogota Declaration of 1976, as follows:

First, the rights of sovereignty of the equatorial countries are understood as being intended to benefit first their own peoples and, thereafter, the peoples of the developing countries and the international community.

Secondly, the segments of the orbit corresponding to areas of the high seas beyond the jurisdiction of States are the common heritage of mankind, and the competent international agencies should regulate their use and exploration equally for the benefit of all and particularly the developing countries.

Thirdly, the equatorial States do not object to the free transit of satellites in orbit over their territories when their orbits fall outside the geostationary orbit.

Fourthly, the placing of an object in fixed orbit in the path of the geostationary orbit of an equatorial State shall require prior and express authorization by that equatorial State and its operation shall be regulated by the national laws of that same State.

Fifthly, the use of a national segment of the geostationary orbit by a foreign satellite shall not create any right for the State or the enterprise owning that satellite.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

With respect to remote sensing of the earth by satellites, my country wishes to restate the need for the adoption of the principle of prior consultation with the sensed State, together with the international obligation to deliver to the sensed State first data obtained on its territory and to allow free access for that State to the analysed information obtained by the processing of these primary data. Ecuador would support the establishment of an international agency to regulate the activities of remote sensing of the earth and to permit States which do not at present possess the necessary technology to participate directly and permanently, without discrimination of any kind, in all the processes of remote sensing and analysis of the data obtained.

With reference to the draft treaty relating to the moon, our delegation has maintained in the Legal Sub-Committee and wishes to state again in this Committee the following essential principles for the adoption of an international instrument:

First, the moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind; secondly, all countries of the world must share equitably in the benefits obtained in the exploration and exploitation of the moon; and, thirdly, the régime to be established must take into account particularly the interests and needs of the developing countries.

With regard to the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, we are convinced that its convening is a good and timely idea. That Conference will of course have to deal with scientific and technical aspects, but it must also take up legal aspects, which are of such great interest to the Latin American countries and the developing world in general and which, therefore, constitute a significant proportion of the work of this Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee. My delegation will go into greater detail on these aspects when we begin consideration of the specific item.

My delegation wishes to thank the delegation of the Soviet Union for its interest in the Joint Declaration signed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador and Colombia, in Quito, on 2 March 1979. That Declaration reaffirms the agreement laid down in the aforementioned Bogota Declaration of 1976, which was adopted not only by these two countries but also by seven equatorial countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and whose

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

principles and recommendations are in force for all those countries. As distinct from the so-called SALT II Treaty, to which the representative of the Soviet Union referred, the sovereign Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador and Colombia made at Quito does not regulate arms race but, on the contrary, refers to the peaceful use of a natural resource of the earth, which must be ordered for the benefit of all the equatorial countries and the developing countries in general. At the same time, Ecuador and Colombia wish to make a contribution to the maintenance of outer space as a zone of peace and, therefore, to its non-use for military purposes. For the deplorable race in space for military purposes is already a fact, and the information media are already discussing it; there is already talk of armed satellites and killer satellites, of spacecraft designed to destroy other space objects and, furthermore, of spy satellites. We have heard that a single Power has already spent \$50 billion in 20 years for military space projects. But, above all, there is the chilling rumour that there could be war in space within a decade, before a treaty could be drawn up to ban offensive weapons from interplanetary space. Furthermore, it is not possible for the growing congestion of the geostationary orbit to continue on the basis of the arbitrary system of first come, first served, which is simply the application of the right of the economically and technologically stronger, something that is unacceptable in an organized international community.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

In view of the foregoing, the delegation of Ecuador, in defending the resource of the geostationary orbit both for the equatorial countries and all the developing countries, is opposed to any definition and/or delimitation of space which would not give a prior determination of the extent of the geostationary orbit, bearing in mind the sui generis nature of the orbit, which we do not regard as part of outer space.

That is why Ecuador considers that the only way open to the developing countries is the total reservation of segments of the resource situated over their territories in order to avoid its complete exhaustion. The position of the developing countries is not that of the space Powers, which already do in fact occupy and use the orbit. Therefore, our delegation will at all times insist in any relevant body on the defence of rights over the geostationary orbit, and we shall also insist that any decision on this matter that is not adopted solely by consensus, as is the practice in this Committee, would be an imposed decision.

Mr. DASHTSEREN (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, I join with other delegations which have expressed satisfaction that this session of our Committee is taking place under your seasoned and experienced guidance.

The problems of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes are gaining more and more significance in the area of international co-operation, and this is natural because there is a constant increase in the role of this activity in international relations and in the economic and social progress of peoples. In the last 20 years or so mankind has achieved spectacular successes in conquering outer space, and the number of States participating in the exploration and the practical use of scientific achievements in this area is growing. The international co-operation of States in the exploration and the use of outer space is by its nature a global problem affecting the interests of all States of the world. Its further progressive development in large part depends on the general state of affairs in the world and on the soundness of international détente. That détente has now become a determinant trend in

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

modern international relations. The process of détente has had and continues to have a favourable impact on the mutually profitable and equitable co-operation of States in different creative areas of human activity.

In this connexion my delegation would like to note that the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Mongolian people warmly welcomed the recent signing of the new Soviet-American treaty on strategic arms limitation not only as a major step in the area of slowing down the arms race and achieving the goals of disarmament but also as a genuine contribution to the cause of strengthening general peace and international co-operation.

A convincing example of equitable and mutually profitable co-operation is to be found in the joint programme of the socialist countries called INTERCOSMOS. That programme is carrying out a broad range of research on different problems relating to space physics, meteorology, space communications, medical biology and remote sensing of the earth. The joint space flights of the socialist countries constitute very important events in the annals of space history. We should like to take this opportunity once again to congratulate the delegations of the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic and Bulgaria on their successful joint space flights.

In this connexion I am delighted to point out that the day is not far off when a citizen of the Mongolian People's Republic will go up into space along with Soviet cosmonauts, who have been the pioneers in space flight. The Mongolian People's Republic is, as a participant in the INTERCOSMOS space programme, continuing active participation in its research. In particular, we are in our country carrying out research into the interaction of outer space high energy radiation with the magnetic belt of the earth, and we have regularly operating observation stations which are tracking the artificial earth satellites. The latter in turn accumulate geodesic and geophysical information which is subsequently processed jointly among the countries participating in the INTERCOSMOS programme.

We are doing successful work in the study of physical phenomena taking place on the sun. Basically, we are doing research into the sun's corona and sun flares. Along with scientists of the Soviet Union and the German

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

Democratic Republic we are performing successful technological experiments in establishing a basic geodesic network for the Mongolian People's Republic by using space triangulation and balloon geodesic science. The information received is being processed in the scientific institutes of the Mongolian People's Republic, the USSR and the German Democratic Republic.

In recent years more and more significance is being given to the use of outer space for practical purposes. Our country is using meteorological satellites and television broadcasting and telephone communications satellite systems. Remote sensing of the earth is opening up new avenues in the identification of the natural resources of our country. The Mongolian People's Republic has concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union in which we are planning to photograph the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic from outer space. The photographs obtained through this exercise will basically be used to put together different types of thematic maps in the fields of geology, geography, vegetation and so on.

The Mongolian delegation on the whole has a positive view of the work done by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee at its sixteenth session. During that Sub-Committee's session, my delegation had the opportunity to set forth its position on some important questions on the agenda of that session. As is known, the Mongolian People's Republic attaches great importance to the convening of a second United Nations Conference on Outer Space. During the sixteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee significant progress was achieved in preparations for the Conference. The Mongolian People's Republic feels that the second United Nations Conference on Outer Space will allow us to sum up the international co-operation which has been carried out in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and give new impetus for further activities in this field.

As regards the agenda for that Conference, my delegation supports the inclusion of questions on the present situation in the area of space science and technology, on its further development and also on international co-operation and the role of the United Nations.

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

We think that we shall at this session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space be able to reach agreement on as yet unsettled questions regarding the convening of that Conference. As it already indicated in its statement in the general debate of the sixteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, our delegation warmly welcomes the decision of the Government of the USSR to invite a Conference to Moscow. My delegation hopes that Moscow will be chosen as the venue of the Conference. With respect to the date for the convening of the Conference, the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic is in favour of August 1982.

My delegation's position on the question of remote sensing of the earth by satellites is known to everyone. The Mongolian People's Republic attaches great significance to the development and expansion of international co-operation in this field. It commends the role of the United Nations in co-ordinating such co-operation. In the development of international co-operation in the area of remote sensing of the earth from outer space, the principle of the permanent sovereignty of each State over its natural resources should be acknowledged and strictly observed as should the principle of the freedom of scientific research in outer space. In processing the data received from remote sensing, great significance should be attached to the classification of data and to the observance of the principle of transmitting the data first of all to the sensed State so as to obtain its agreement for the further dissemination of that data. Our delegation supports the idea of convening a group of experts on remote sensing of the earth.

With respect to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, constructive work in this field was begun at the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We hope that this work will be continued successfully in the future, so that it may be quickly completed. My delegation believes that the use of nuclear power sources in outer space research should not be limited, provided that there is strict observance of measures to ensure the security and safety in its use.

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

Our delegation also attaches great importance to the settlement of the international legal problems linked with the exploration and use of outer space. Our delegation hopes that such important questions as the elaboration of draft principles to regulate the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, the development of draft principles for the remote sensing of the earth from outer space through the use of artificial earth satellites and the preparation of a draft treaty relating to the moon will be completed in the near future and that all delegations will make a maximum effort to that end.

With respect to the question of direct television broadcasting by satellites, we feel that it can be carried out only on the basis of consultation and agreement between the broadcasting and the receiving States. In this respect the Canadian-Swedish text can be a basis for achieving compromise.

The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic hopes that we shall during this session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space succeed in making progress in working out an agreed approach in the preparation of a draft treaty relating to the moon and on the question of the definition and/or delimitation of outer space. Our delegation feels that the working document presented by the delegation of the USSR, contained in document A/AC.105/L.112, dated 20 June 1979, will be a good basis on which to achieve compromise in this area.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of its complete co-operation in the solution of the problems facing the Committee.

Mr. VAN BUUREN (Netherlands): Mr. Chairman, I should like first of all to express my delegation's gratitude for the decision of your Government to make you available for the chairmanship of this Committee, in spite of your assignment and other duties elsewhere. We are convinced that your experience and skill will greatly facilitate the work of this body.

(Mr. Van Duuren, Netherlands)

I shall not dwell upon the space activities carried out in the Netherlands, as a review of these activities was presented by the Netherlands delegation at the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

Speaking before this Committee, I am preaching to the converted when I say that space activities and space technology have already yielded great benefits and that they will bring us even more impressive advantages in the future. On the other hand, we are forced to state that all technological progress inevitably creates new problems. Progress in the field of the use of outer space is no exception.

The most obvious problem with space activities is the risk of an accident with a space object. The forthcoming re-entry into the earth's atmosphere of SKYLAB shows us once more that this risk is by no means merely hypothetical. The existing body of space law already contains rules pertaining to the consequences of such an accident, in particular articles V and VII of the Outer Space Treaty and the Conventions on astronauts and liability. In the view of my delegation, our Committee should consider whether there is a need for additional regulations, aimed at minimizing the risk of accidents and at providing States likely to be affected, with all necessary information.

Since January 1978 we have all been aware of the fact that the risk of accidents with space objects has a special character if such an object carries a nuclear power source. Consequently, it was, in our view, with full justification that this Committee and the two Sub-Committees took up the matter. As far as the technical aspects are concerned, my delegation gladly supports the conclusions reached by the Working Group on Nuclear Power Sources, as contained in annex II of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We fully agree with the recommendation of the Working Group that it should resume its work during the next session of the Sub-Committee.

(Mr. van Buuren, Netherlands)

My delegation is of the opinion that the legal aspects of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space deserve attention as well. Some legal problems such as the establishment of rules on admissible radiation levels or assistance in case of uncontrolled return of a space object carrying a nuclear power source can be tackled only on the basis of technical studies. Other legal problems, however, for example, the establishment of a system for the registration of objects containing nuclear power sources or the adoption of rules on notification in case of malfunctioning of such space objects, could be dealt with by the Legal Sub-Committee without waiting for technical studies. It seems logical to add a separate item on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space to the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee.

Generally speaking, it seems to us that a parallel and well-co-ordinated approach to the nuclear power source problem in the two Sub-Committees would give the best prospects for fruitful work.

The problems emanating from technological progress do not involve only the risk of accidents but also the risk of the use of the results of that progress for other than peaceful purposes. In this connexion, too, the use of outer space is no exception.

One of the major merits of the Outer Space Treaty is certainly its article IV containing the undertaking not to place in orbit around the earth any object carrying nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapons of mass destruction nor to install such weapons on celestial bodies nor to station such weapons in outer space in any other manner, as well as the undertaking to use the moon and other celestial bodies exclusively for peaceful purposes. That article has excluded certain developments with dangerous implications for world peace and security. It has thereby contributed to greater mutual confidence between States. Unfortunately, however, we must conclude that this treaty provision has not excluded other undesired developments, such as the sending into orbit of objects carrying weapons other than weapons of mass destruction aimed, for example, at other space objects. We welcome the bilateral talks on this kind

(Mr. van Buuren, Netherlands)

of problem between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Outer Space Treaty having been elaborated in this Committee, we feel that our Committee might take an interest in following the developments.

In reviewing the work of our two Sub-Committees, I should like to make the following additional remarks.

With regard to remote sensing, the Netherlands has always emphasized the need for international co-operation. Consequently, we supported the idea of a panel of experts on remote sensing and we have put forward proposals for the implementation of that idea. We regret that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee did not succeed in reaching agreement on the establishment of such a panel.

In the view of my delegation, no concrete arguments have been put forward to prove that the dissemination of remote sensing data or information to others than the sensed and the sensing States would harm the interests of the sensed State. Moreover, limiting access to data or information to those two categories of States would create an unjustified difference between the growing group of States which possess the means for carrying out remote sensing and other States. We see no reason therefore for the adoption of rules limiting the availability of data or information. In order to enable all countries to interpret and use the results of remote sensing techniques in the most beneficial way, due attention should be given to the provision of assistance in the field of training and education to less advanced countries. In this connexion, we attach great value to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

In spite of considerable efforts, the Legal Sub-Committee did not reach a breakthrough on the question of the formulation of principles regarding direct television broadcasting by satellites. My delegation maintains its view that proposals for the solution of outstanding questions should take into account the technical realities. We should avoid the establishment of rules which, on the one hand, would be superfluous in view of the already existing technical limitations and, on the other hand, would create the risk of limiting the free exchange of information regardless of State frontiers.

(Mr. van Buuren, Netherlands)

With reference to the draft treaty relating to the moon, I should like to repeat that we can accept the text contained in the Austrian working paper - which forms annex II of last year's report of our Committee - with some minor changes, for which the Netherlands delegation has put forward proposals in the Legal Sub-Committee. In the view of my delegation, that text is a viable basis for reaching an over-all agreement on the draft treaty.

My delegation shares the concern expressed by some delegations about the working methods of our Committee. We have listened with interest to the French and Australian suggestions to hold the sessions of the Committee and of its two Sub-Committees simultaneously or in overlapping periods. We hope that those suggestions will be given careful attention.

We welcome the second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The proposals for the Conference's agenda, as contained in the latest report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, cover a wide range of subjects. Those subjects include purely scientific problems as well as problems related to the practical application of space technology. My delegation believes that the present stage of developments does not require a conference of a purely scientific character - a conference, so to speak, by scientists for scientists. Emphasis should be placed on practical aspects, particularly the possibilities and limitations of the application of the various forms of space technology. Furthermore, in order to make the Conference as productive as possible, we feel that it should be organized so that the deliberations will focus on specific items. Very useful work has been done for the preparation of the Conference. We trust that during this session of the Committee further progress will be made.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Romanian delegation, I should like to express our great pleasure at seeing you presiding again over this major body of the United Nations.

My delegation fully shares the conviction that under your competent leadership the Committee's work will proceed in the best possible conditions and that we shall see fresh progress made.

At the same time, it is our pleasant duty to express our appreciation for the contribution made the Chairman of the two Sub-Committees, Mr. Wyzner of Poland and Mr. Carver of Australia, and by the representatives who chaired the various working groups.

I should like to take this opportunity to say once more how grateful my delegation is to the members of the Outer Space Affairs Division and to other sections of the Secretariat of the United Nations for their important contribution to the good working of the Committee and its Sub-Committees.

Mr. Chairman, your preliminary statement contained valuable assessments of the state of progress in topics under consideration, of the difficulties that still persist and of what should be done to overcome them. We wish to make special mention of your ideas concerning the need to ensure the participation of all countries, in particular in the projects having practical consequences, and to give greater place to concerns about the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In view of the eminently international nature of this subject and the practical possibilities that it offers for the solution of many major problems of contemporary life, it is essential to direct efforts towards the elaboration of methods of co-operation that would help to speed up the economic and social development of all countries, in particular the developing countries, and towards the satisfaction of the fundamental requirements of the new international economic order to be established. In the final analysis, this is the decisive condition for stability in the world and for general progress.

This practical purpose calls for the consideration and definition of principles rules and methods of co-operation, the adoption of which should, if not precede, at least keep pace with scientific and technological progress. We feel that the only solid basis for such co-operation is to be found in the fundamental principles of international law and inter-State relations that will allow us in each de facto situation to produce the most just and equitable consequences.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

We should recall that the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes must remain the fundamental objective to be pursued with the greatest attention and resolution. Discussions at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, like the statements made by a number of delegations at this session of the Committee, show how the concern that the arms race be kept out of outer space is uppermost in people's minds. I venture to recall that among the elements for a global programme of disarmament recently listed by the United Nations Disarmament Commission there were included measures to be undertaken so as to prevent the arms race from extending into outer space, and we hope that all the factors that may contribute to the implementation of those measures will be given due weight in the appropriate organizations and bodies.

Another point to which we attach fundamental importance for international co-operation in this area is the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations, both in the drawing up and adoption of regulations and in their application. We shall have an opportunity of coming back to this matter on some points of the agenda, but we wish to stress that, because of its purposes and functions, the United Nations is the body most able to deal with an area that is generally acknowledged to be the common heritage of mankind.

The results obtained thus far in the Committee and in its Sub-Committees are far from negligible, particularly if we take into account the fact that this is in many ways a relatively new field and that most of the problems are rather complex, both in their technical and scientific aspects and because of their political, legal and other implications. Like other delegations, we none the less feel that the results are not satisfactory. We must not rest on our laurels and much remains to be done if the Committee and its Sub-Committees are to be, so to speak, the boffins that can provide the United Nations with an over-all picture of the problems and issues arising in this area and of their most appropriate solutions.

Although the activity of these bodies depends, first and foremost, on the political will of the member States, it is none the less true that the organization of work and the methods and the procedures used can in turn affect the results and solutions sought. Therefore we favour suggestions to improve the practices followed at present in the Committee and its Sub-Committees. To our

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

way of thinking, it would be useful for the Committee to deal directly with one or several subjects at each session. In this way we could lighten the burden of the Sub-Committees and, particularly, we could avoid repetitive discussions over fairly long periods with referrals from one Sub-Committee to the other.

With regard to the items on the agenda, my delegation would like to dwell on the preparations for the second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

As we stressed on other occasions, in view of the importance of this effort it seems necessary to us that the Committee submit to the General Assembly recommendations and ideas that have been thoroughly considered and that would facilitate its work, in particular with regard to the nature of the Conference and the objectives to be attributed to it.

In view of the character of the Conference, it seems to us essential to ensure that all States can take an effective part in all stages of the preparatory work, in particular in topics of interest to them.

It is our opinion that work on the finalization of the agenda should go on throughout the process of preparation, by means of consultations among interested countries and that the agenda should be drawn up in such a way as to allow for the possibility of debate, negotiation and the preparation of recommendations on specific measures.

In particular, the problems that most directly relate to the most acute needs of the developing countries should be dealt with in depth at the Conference in order to identify the possibilities for co-operation and, above all, to agree on measures required to ensure the proper use of existing possibilities. We have in mind measures such as the provision of the most extensive access, in conditions advantageous to all countries, in particular the developing countries, to the latest techniques of the application of space technology and to the results of activities in this area; and, for this purpose, the provision of increased assistance to the developing countries; the establishment and strengthening of national capabilities and the training of staff; and the extensive and unrestricted transfer of space technology. Like other delegations, we consider that the work of the Conference should converge with that of other United Nations conferences, among them the Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the aim being to find ways and means to resolve specific pressing problems of the developing countries.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

With regard to the venue of the second United Nations Conference on Outer Space, we note with pleasure that the delegation of the USSR has repeated the offer of its Government to act as host to that major international gathering in Moscow. As we remarked in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the vast experience of the USSR, its remarkable achievements and its active participation both bilateral and multilateral in international co-operation in outer space are all factors that would contribute to the success of the Conference.

The second item on which we wish briefly to comment is the remote sensing of the earth by satellite. Like other delegations, we think that this is a topic to which the Committee should give priority consideration. The General Assembly endorsed the recommendation that more time and attention should be given to a detailed consideration of all relevant aspects of remote sensing. Unfortunately, however, we have made no significant progress.

To our way of thinking, the drawing up of generally acceptable rules and principles on the dissemination of data obtained by remote sensing must be secondary to ensuring the greatest possible access of States to the results of space technology.

Therefore greater importance should be given to the large body of opinion according to which there is no scientific or technological reason for denying a sensed State, in due course and without any discrimination, access to data concerning its own territory. This derives from the permanent sovereignty of each State over the natural wealth and resources of its territory. Our delegation supports the idea that access must be ensured, unreservedly and at reasonable cost, for all States to all data obtained by any remote-sensing satellite, following the practice used for the reception of data obtained by meteorological satellites.

The increasingly frequent implementation of operational systems of space technology doubtless calls for institutional machinery that is better adapted to ensuring international co-operation, taking particular account of the needs of developing countries. From this point of view, like many other States, Romania favours the idea of there being a group of experts on remote sensing - open to participation by interested and concerned countries - whose task it would be to draw up recommendations on the various aspects of international co-operation in this area.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

In our opinion, apart from the general objective of ensuring the compatibility and complementarity of operational remote-sensing systems, the group of experts should have as its mission the promotion of the widest possible access by States to information services providing data, the provision of the necessary support in the analysis of data and their practical application by the users, the promotion of the transfer of technology and the training of skilled personnel, particularly for the developing countries. To us it seems important for the Committee to endorse the idea that emerged in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee - namely, that discussions should be geared more towards the practical needs of States and, in particular, those of the developing countries.

With reference to direct television broadcasting by satellite, our delegation feels that the draft principles it is our task to elaborate could be finalized on the basis of the document submitted this year by Canada and Sweden. We think it absolutely necessary to introduce into that draft provisions designed to guarantee that direct television programmes will be broadcast by satellite only after agreement by the receiver State and the latter must have the opportunity to influence the content of programmes to the broadcasting of which it has given its agreement in accordance with its sovereign rights and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

Another document that could be drawn up and concluded is the draft treaty relating to the moon, which the Austrian delegation has submitted in compromise form after lengthy and arduous labour, for which it deserves our warmest appreciation. We think we are not hoping for too much when we say that we would like to see reflected appropriately in this document the idea that the natural resources of the moon form part of the common heritage of mankind and that in due course the exploitation of those resources should be carried out on the basis of an international régime.

Concerning the use of nuclear power sources in space, we feel that progress has already been made, particularly as a result of the introduction, in the resolution recently adopted by the General Assembly, of the idea that States launching satellites should warn other interested and concerned States if a space object bearing nuclear power sources should suffer any malfunction that might cause the re-entry into the earth's atmosphere of radioactive materials.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

Similarly, the continuation of the consideration of technical aspects and safety measures concerning the use of such power sources seems already to be an idea that is no longer controversial. Proof of this is the work undertaken by our Working Group on this matter.

Our delegation favours the idea that it is necessary to go into greater detail on the advantages and risks of such activities, to put forward recommendations and to take measures to allow those activities to be pursued, but in safe conditions on the basis of an international system of regulation that accords with the model agreed upon for regulations concerning the use of nuclear power on earth.

Concerning the programmes and activities of the United Nations relative to outer space, we feel that the Committee should among its recommendations to the General Assembly maintain the need to expand the programmes in question, including the provision of extra funds and the creation of a more advanced institutional framework and structure.

In this connexion it is our pleasant duty yet again to thank Mr. Murthy for his efforts in his capacity as Expert in the United Nations programme and to wish him all the best for the future.

At the same time we wish to congratulate Mr. Padang on his appointment to that post and to wish him every success.

With reference to future work, in our opinion it is of the highest importance to go into greater detail, to be more thorough and to see that there is more general knowledge of the idea that the co-ordinating role of the United Nations should be strengthened and that the consideration of problems and issues on the agenda should be given a new direction in order duly to take into account the priority needs of the developing countries.

The Romanian delegation has listened with the greatest interest to the information provided by the speakers who have preceded me concerning the recent successes within their national research and space applications programmes and international co-operation in this area. Like other delegations, we wish to congratulate the Soviet delegation on the wide-ranging space programmes that that country continues to develop, on the major successes obtained particularly by space station SALYUT-6 and the flights of the SOYUZ spacecraft. We also congratulate it on its untiring efforts to contribute to the development of various activities within INTERCOSMOS, an organization in which Romania takes an active part.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

We also wish to congratulate the United States, a country which has again made remarkable progress in this area, particularly in the development of the space shuttle and the flight of VOYAGER I. As we have pointed out on other occasions, some Romanian projects in the field of the application of space technology have been carried out or are being carried out in co-operation with specialized American agencies. We are very pleased to note the remarkable and continuing achievements of a growing number of States in activities undertaken in space.

Like many other countries, Romania intends to continue and to develop its activities in space on the basis of active and constructive international co-operation. In the same spirit, the Romanian delegation wishes to make its contribution to the consideration of the issues on the agenda of the Committee at this session.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): Mr. Chairman, I should like at the outset to join other speakers and express, on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, my satisfaction at seeing you preside, at this session also, over the work of our Committee in the competent and able manner so characteristic of your skill. We are hopeful that at the current session this Committee will take a significant step forward towards a completion of the tasks entrusted to it in the interests of all States and for the benefit of the whole of mankind.

The Outer Space Committee has come a long way in the 22 years since its inception. Although this is a relatively short period, the Committee has successfully settled a great many of the problems facing it, problems posed by the exceptionally rapid headway made in space research and exploration, the growing sophistication of outer space technology and its utilization and the need to elaborate legal norms and principles regulating national activities in outer space, and other problems. Further success in the solution of the items on our agenda can be said to depend entirely on co-ordinated efforts and on a display of positive willingness, co-operation and mutual understanding by all member States of this Committee.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

Mr. Chairman, as you so fittingly observed, the beginning of the current session coincided with a remarkable event, namely, the signing of the new Soviet-American Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. On that remarkable occasion my Government issued a declaration, which stated, inter alia, that:

"The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the entire Bulgarian people welcome with feelings of utmost satisfaction the signing of the new Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. This Treaty marks a major step forward on the road to curbing the arms race and corresponds to the interests of all peoples in the world."

There is no doubt that this new Treaty will give a fresh impetus to international co-operation on the global problems confronting mankind, including the mastery of outer space.

The year since the last session of this Committee was a particularly prosperous one for the space activities of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. In pursuance of its national programme for scientific research and practical applications of space technology, Bulgaria further developed and extended its participation in the INTERCOSMOS programme on the basis of the principles of fraternal co-operation and mutual assistance.

Our national space research programme puts significant emphasis on space experiments with Bulgarian equipment. Bulgarian-made equipment was installed aboard several INTERCOSMOS satellites, and on the "Vertikal" rockets which were designed for studies in space physics. Bulgarian scientists are continuing their work on the geodesic programmes "Big Chord", "Dynamics" and "Atmosphere". We are obtaining satisfactory results with the programme for the exploration of resources by remote-sensing satellites. We are proceeding further with the interpretation of pictures of Bulgarian territory taken from outer space and with the preparations for the launching of the "Bulgaria 1300" space project.

On the road of international co-operation, my country reached a memorable point in its 13 centuries of existence with the historic flight of the first Bulgarian cosmonaut, Engineer Georgi Ivanov, who orbited the earth aboard the SOYUZ-33 spacecraft together with the Soviet cosmonaut Wikolai Rukavishnikov. The Bulgarian people are justifiably proud of that exceptional flight to which, in the words of Leonid Brezhnev:

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

"... a special place in outer space textbooks will be devoted because the craft's crew had to work under unusually difficult circumstances."

I should like from this rostrum to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Soviet Union, without whose selfless assistance and all-round support that flight would have been, plainly speaking, impossible. It is not by chance that the expression: "Bulgaria was launched into outer space on the wings of the Bulgarian-Soviet friendship", became very popular in my country. As to Bulgaria's future activities in outer space, I think that the following words of Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of our Communist Party and President of the Council of State, are an apt illustration of the course that lies ahead:

"Let us strengthen and deepen the fraternal friendship between the Bulgarian and Soviet cosmonauts, among the cosmonauts and peoples of the socialist countries, and among all peoples for whom the earth is the home of mankind and outer space is a field for competition in the name of mankind's happiness".

I should like to conclude my remarks on this subject by expressing my sincere appreciation to all representatives and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations who congratulated my country on the occasion of the flight of the first Bulgarian cosmonaut.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria has a high opinion of the work of the Legal and Scientific and Technical Sub-Committees. It takes an active part in their work. Of particular importance is the extensive work carried out in the legal field. The elaboration and the entry into force of four important conventions have laid the ground-work for a just legal order, ensuring that, in the interest of all countries, outer space is used for the benefit of the whole of mankind.

In this connexion I should like to touch upon an issue which I have already raised in the Legal Sub-Committee and which, my delegation submits, is of great significance. Despite the importance of the drafting of such legal instruments, the final effect of our efforts is determined by the number and range of States which elect to be bound by those instruments. I submit that this Committee cannot remain indifferent on this matter, all the less

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

since there is still much room for improvement in this respect. Let us take for instance the 1967 Treaty, which is a basic instrument in space law. That Treaty has been ratified or acceded to by approximately 80 States, which is slightly more than half the membership of the United Nations. In the view of my delegation it is necessary for the main Committee, and particularly for the Legal Sub-Committee, to take up this question and to outline a course of action to achieve the universal application of conventions that have been signed and have entered into force.

The use of satellites for direct television broadcasting raises for all States a host of political, economic, legal, cultural and other kinds of problems which necessitate an urgent solution. The Bulgarian delegation attaches major importance to the elaboration of principles which would guarantee the use of this achievement of human ingenuity in the interests of peace, mutual understanding and co-operation among States. From my delegation's point of view, our work in this direction has been hampered so far by the rigid way in which certain States cling to their national concept in the field of the mass media. By their attitude they try to avoid the fact that what we are discussing here is a part of international relations where the universally adopted principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States should prevail. In our view the outstanding questions can be resolved only if we adhere to article VI of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies, where there is a clear indication concerning the international responsibility of States for any national activities in outer space.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

We also regard the remote sensing of the earth from outer space as of considerable importance. As a party to the Convention on the Transfer and Use of Data Obtained by Remote Sensing, which was signed in Moscow on 19 May 1978, Bulgaria uses the methods of remote sensing for efficiently solving concrete problems of its economic development. We consider that the principles laid down in that Convention can serve as groundwork for co-operation on a global scale, particularly on the issue of data classification and the order for their dissemination. In this regard, my delegation is hopeful that the current session will witness new efforts which will bring us closer to reaching a consensus on the outstanding issues for the purpose of formulating draft principles.

We also hope that the current session will mark another step forward in the co-ordination of the positions of States on the draft treaty on the moon and that, before long, international space law will be provided with a new important instrument for the legal regulation of space activities.

The question of the definition and/or delimitation of outer space is undoubtedly an important one, particularly in connexion with the questions raised by some States in relation to the geostationary orbit. We welcome the new proposal put forward by the Soviet Union, document A/AC.105/L.112, with respect to the joint comprehensive consideration of these two questions in a spirit of compromise and of a search for a commonly acceptable basis for the solution of such complicated issues.

As to the convening of the Second United Nations Conference on Outer Space, we consider that it should not be limited just to a discussion of scientific and technological matters. It should examine such questions with regard to man's needs and the environment. We are also very pleased to note the announcement made at the sixteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and confirmed in this Committee by Ambassador Troyanovsky, regarding the Soviet Union's readiness to play host to the Second United Nations Outer Space Conference. We hope the Committee will accept this offer, which is of a nature to ensure very favourable conditions for the Conference itself.

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

To conclude, I should like to state the willingness of my delegation to make its contribution in solving the questions on our agenda in the spirit of constructive co-operation, that has become a distinctive tradition in the work of this Committee.

Mr. GURAKAN (Turkey): Mr. Chairman, my delegation whole heartedly joins all the previous speakers who have expressed their satisfaction at seeing you once again presiding over the deliberations of our Committee. We are confident that under your able guidance the work of the Committee will proceed in an effective and constructive manner.

I should also like to express our appreciation to the Chairmen of the two Sub-Committees, Mr. Carver of Australia and Mr. Wyzner of Poland, for their untiring efforts in discharging their important tasks. We also wish to pay a tribute to the valuable contribution of the Outer Space Division of the United Nations to the work of our Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

On previous occasions, my delegation has outlined the scope and nature of the activities being conducted in Turkey in connexion with space technology and related subjects. I therefore will not deal at this time with our relatively modest initiatives in this field.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation shares the feelings of regret expressed by you as well as by many other delegations at the slow pace of our work this year in the Sub-Committees, particularly in the Legal Sub-Committee. In our view, the lack of progress in the work of the Sub-Committees stems, to a certain extent, from the complex and highly technical nature of the subjects we are dealing with. Therefore, we favour the suggestions that closer co-operation between the two Sub-Committees of the main Committee would be considerably helpful in removing some of the obstacles and misunderstandings that we have faced so far. However, we believe that the existence of political will and the spirit of compromise which has prevailed in this Committee for so many years are prerequisites for the progress and the successful outcome of our deliberations.

(Mr. Gurakan, Turkey)

Let me turn now briefly to some of the agenda items before us. One of the most controversial subjects on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee's last session was the question of direct television broadcasting by satellites. It is unfortunate that despite the commendable efforts of the Canadian and the Swedish delegations in formulating a draft text, which in our view could have constituted a reasonable basis for a compromise solution, we could not make any progress on this subject. We are open to new ideas and suggestions in this respect, as long as they are compatible with the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Remote sensing of the earth from satellites is another important and still unresolved issue. The highly scientific and technical aspects of this issue should certainly be taken into account in formulating its legal framework. Co-ordination and close co-operation between the two Sub-Committees is particularly important in working out a solution to this question. We earnestly hope that joint efforts of the two Sub-Committees will soon result in a workable legal solution which will safeguard the economic interests and legitimate rights of all countries.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress achieved during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the question of nuclear power sources in outer space. We hope that in the light of the scientific findings of the Sub-Committee we shall be able to elaborate the legal aspects of this question as soon as possible. The SKYLAB experience, although different in nature and scope, has been a reminder of the importance and urgency of this question. In this connexion, I should like to express our appreciation to the United States delegation for its comprehensive account regarding the SKYLAB's re-entry process.

Once again we have not been able to make a breakthrough in the recent session of the Legal Sub-Committee on the question of the treaty on the moon. The outstanding obstacle in reaching an agreement on this subject is still the question of the natural resources of the moon. As is known, my delegation supports the

(Mr. Gurakan, Turkey)

view that all countries should have the right to benefit from the resources of the moon on a fair and reasonable basis. We are of the opinion that the Austrian draft text constitutes a viable starting point for reaching a compromise on this question.

My delegation hopes that in our capacity as the Preparatory Committee for the second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, we shall be able to complete our deliberations on this agenda item during this session and submit comprehensive recommendations to the forthcoming General Assembly.

We believe that this Conference, if adequately prepared, will be an important step in furthering international co-operation in the field of outer space and especially in helping the developing countries to improve their technological capabilities. Our attitude regarding the remaining unresolved questions concerning the date and venue of the Conference and organizational matters is flexible. We pledge our full support and co-operation in reaching a solution on these subjects.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.