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Chairman: Mr. Ismail FAHMY
(United Arab Republic).

AGENDA ITEM 32

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (*continued*) [A/6668, A/6804]

GENERAL DEBATE (*concluded*)

1. Mr. TARAZI (Syria) (*translated from French*): May I at the outset, Mr. Chairman, offer you my sincere and hearty congratulations and those of my delegation, on your unanimous election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee. The outstanding qualities you have already demonstrated constitute a real guarantee of success for our work. We extend similar congratulations to the Vice-Chairman and to the Rapporteur.
2. The item at present under discussion is of prime importance for the future of mankind. Historically, the end of the Second World War ushered in a new era, the atomic age. Barely twelve years later an outstanding and fantastic event thrust man into another new age. In October 1957, the Soviet Union became the first country to place the first artificial Earth satellite into orbit. From that day on, all that previously had belonged to what we called "science fiction" became hard fact. Outer space was explored. A few years later, the Soviet Union was likewise to send the first man into space. The United States followed suit.
3. Since that time, great progress has been made in that vital and basic area. In addition to the achievements of the USSR, the United States of America and France, we must pay a tribute to the efforts made by Italy, India, Pakistan and other countries in the area of space co-operation.
4. The Soviet people and Government are likewise to be congratulated on the success they have just achieved with the announcement of the soft landing of the unmanned station Venus 4 on the surface of Venus. That is a major achievement to add to all those that have preceded it.

5. My delegation has examined the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space [A/6804], and we wish to pay a tribute to the objective spirit that has gone into its preparation and drafting. However, there are still many gaps that remain to be filled. They are caused by a number of basic factors, and at the same time they arise from an obvious fact, namely that man, for all his mastery of machines and technology, has not as yet been able to adapt social and legal standards to the conditions of science and scientific development.

6. The wide disparity between the tempo of development for the advance of the natural sciences and that for the advance of the human and social sciences is very wide. Until we have bridged the gulf between these two distinct areas of knowledge, we cannot tackle firmly and resolutely the task of solving the problems from which mankind is now suffering.

7. The remark I have just made may sound strange to some people. Yet it is valid for the great majority of the States Members of the Organization, namely, the developing countries. Although they do not have the means to take part in space research, the developing countries are none the less concerned with the achievements and endeavours of other countries.

8. The peoples of the world seek peace. They therefore want science to serve the cause of peace, for, as a great thinker has said, "science without conscience merely destroys the soul".

9. Having explored continents, mountains, lakes, seas and oceans, man is now discovering and exploring outer space. His discoveries must therefore be placed at the service of the development and progress of mankind as a whole; and thus, the interests of the various individual members of mankind must not run counter to the over-all interests of the peoples of the world. Hence it is of interest to note that the discovery of outer space occurred at a historic moment that marks the decline of what has come to be called the colonialist or even the imperialist era. The discovery of steam at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century gave birth to the historical period known as the Industrial Revolution.

10. For some European countries and for the United States of America, that period was an inexhaustible source of progress, growth and prosperity; but it was the basis of sufferings endured by the peoples that came under the colonial yoke and brought about by colonial expansion, itself the fruit of the Industrial Revolution.

11. Without belabouring the point, my delegation realizes that today conditions have changed, and the circumstances

that prevailed at the time of the Industrial Revolution are in no way comparable to those that the world is facing in the present stage of history—the space age.

12. Notwithstanding the changes due to the decline of colonialism and imperialism—and I use the word “decline” advisedly—new countries and young States are anxious to obtain guarantees concerning the use of outer space and the fair and universal sharing of the fruits of the research being carried out in that sphere. My delegation took careful note of the statement made by the Soviet Union representative in that connexion at the 1497th meeting of our Committee, on 17 October 1967. It cannot but rejoice at the fact that Soviet policy is predicated on seeking co-operation in the field of space, on a basis of equality and respect for the interests of all concerned.

13. Thus, space should not provide an arena for the arms race and for attempts at world domination; in other words, nothing should happen in space comparable to the situation in Viet-Nam and to Israel's aggression which is being aided and abetted by imperialism.

14. For these reasons my delegation cannot but approve the conclusion and entry into force 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 [*resolution 2222 (XXI), Annex*], which opens the way to a new branch of law—space law.

15. Rules and regulations governing this new subject must be prepared in such a way as to promote the development of the new science and to respect the legitimate rights of the States concerned. Thus it is necessary to create a special organ to co-ordinate all aspects of space activity. It is likewise necessary that there should be co-operation among the various research institutions for the benefit of the developing countries. In other words, the rules of peaceful coexistence must be made applicable to the realm of space.

16. By way of conclusion, my delegation expresses the hope that progress will be made along these lines, and that this in turn will bring about changes calculated to benefit mankind as a whole—in particular those who suffer the most.

17. Mr. ÅSTRÖM (Sweden): In spite of your warning, Mr. Chairman, and before you stop me for being out of order, may I be permitted to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau of the Committee. Your exceptional competence, Mr. Chairman, as an experienced and highly skilled diplomat will constitute a most important factor in determining the outcome of our work in this Committee.

18. Mr. Chairman, as you yourself and several speakers before me have already indicated, it is particularly fitting, at a time when the first decade of the space age has just come to a close, to pay tribute to all those Governments and individuals that have made possible the outstanding achievements in space science and technology over the past ten years. This tribute is due in the first place to the two leading space Powers; but it is proper to note that the basic research, which is a prerequisite of the staggering results, has to a large extent been a common enterprise of scientists

and technicians in many countries. Those people form together a true international, working for goals that are supranational. The fruits of this common enterprise belong appropriately to all mankind.

19. The last few days have witnessed new dramatic accomplishments in the field of celestial exploration which merely indicate that the pace at which the horizons of man are continuously widening has by no means slackened. It is gratifying to note that the first decade of the space age closed with new achievements, not only in the scientific and technical fields but also in the area of space law. We were happy to see, last week, the entry into force of the space Treaty which was negotiated last year in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and which constitutes so far the greatest achievement of the Committee.

20. By their simultaneous ratification of the Treaty, the two great Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, gave further evidence of their desire to secure a pacification of outer space, and also—which is no less significant—further evidence of their desire to co-operate for a general relaxation of world tensions.

21. As some speakers in this debate have already pointed out, and as my own delegation has had occasion to state several times before, the Treaty is not complete. Its text prohibits space activities for military purposes to some extent, but it does not provide for a full demilitarization of outer space. In the view of my delegation, it is of great importance that efforts be made to complement the Treaty provisions in that respect.

22. In this context I feel it is proper to repeat that although the Treaty does not provide for a full demilitarization, the obligations under the United Nations Charter to maintain peace and security and to live peacefully together are, of course, also binding on States with regard to their activities in outer space.

23. The report of the Outer Space Committee shows that some progress has been made during the past year with respect to the two draft conventions on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee—that is, the question of liability for damage and the question of assistance to and return of astronauts and space objects [*A/6804, annex III*]. However, progress has been slow. My delegation particularly regrets that more substantial progress has not been made on the draft convention on liability for damage; and it is our hope that renewed and stronger efforts will be made in order to reach an agreed text on that question.

24. I should like here to join all those speakers before me who expressed their great expectations with regard to the international space Conference which will be held in August of next year in Vienna. We are confident that the Conference, placed in that charming capital and arranged, as we know it will be, in an excellent way by the host country, will be a great success. We earnestly hope that all non-space Powers—for whose benefit this Conference has been mainly arranged—will participate.

25. I now wish to turn to another matter which was briefly touched upon by the Swedish delegation at the last

session of the Committee on Outer Space last September. As we said at the time, we believe that the United Nations at some stage will have to deal with the problems connected with the development of mass communication by satellites. It is true that this question is not entirely new to the Committee on Outer Space. It has been referred to from time to time in the debates of that body and was recently brought up by some delegations, amongst them those of Japan, Czechoslovakia and the United Arab Republic, in the debates of the Legal Sub-Committee this year. However, the question has been given only scant attention by the Committee on Outer Space so far and has not been formally on its agenda.

26. I should like to explain briefly what we think the term "mass communication by satellites" means. Scientists foresee that within the near future—ten years from now, or perhaps earlier—systems will have been created and made operative by which fixed satellites will be able to transmit television and radio programmes directly to an unknown number of individual receivers on the ground: that is to say, there will be no intermediate transmitting station between the satellite and a radio or television set in the home of the ordinary person, in the conference hall, in the village market square, and so forth.

27. It is evident that the use of this type of satellite will have tremendous potentialities for good or evil. At the European Space Conference which was held in Rome this summer, the Swedish representative warned member countries against committing themselves irrevocably at this stage to any programme for the development of broadcast satellites of the type referred to in view of the important and only partially-foreseeable political, economic and legal consequences. He said that it would first be necessary to study the problems involved and to find solutions to them, at least in principle, before any final decisions were taken as to the use of such satellites. He further noted that there is no common policy on broadcasting among European countries. Some countries have a broadcasting monopoly; others have several broadcasting companies. Some countries allow commercial programmes; others do not, and so on. These considerations obviously also apply to countries in other continents.

28. It is obvious that broadcast or television satellites of the type I have referred to would have an enormous influence on the broadcasting policies of States. I do not wish to dramatize the situation unduly, but I believe it is safe to say that if we are to avoid chaos it will be necessary, before technical developments have reached the stage when such satellites are put into operation, to establish some rules governing their utilization.

29. As I said, broadcast and television satellites of this kind can be used for good or for evil. It is easy to see what far-reaching benefits they could bring as instruments of mass education. Such utilization of satellites would be of interest to all countries and would be of particular importance to the developing nations—for the good reason, if no other, that the ground communications networks of these nations may not yet have been developed to the same extent as those of the industrialized nations.

30. I have dealt with the topic of mass communication by satellites at some length. The foreseeable problems and

potentialities in this field are of such magnitude and of such universal interest as to become, quite probably, the dominant factor in the field of outer space activities within the next few years. My delegation is therefore of the opinion that the question of mass communication by satellites should be placed on the agenda of the Committee on Outer Space as one requiring careful study in all aspects.

31. In practical terms, it would seem natural to begin such a study by asking the Secretary-General to collect all available information on scientific and technical developments—current as well as foreseeable—on the subject. On the basis of such information, the Committee may wish to initiate a study of the legal aspects involved. The Secretary-General could also perhaps be asked, possibly with the aid of the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other specialized agencies, to assist the Legal Sub-Committee by preparing a study of, amongst other things, earlier General Assembly resolutions and United Nations conventions which have a bearing on this topic.

32. My delegation feels that it is the task of the General Assembly to keep developments on outer space activities in constant focus, and to assign to its Committee on Outer Space such tasks as these developments may call for. In view of this, and on the basis of my previous remarks, it is the hope of my delegation that the General Assembly at this session will place the item of mass communication by satellites on the agenda of the Committee on Outer Space.

33. Mr. COX (Sierra Leone): My delegation would like to associate itself with all those delegations which have so rightly congratulated you on your election to the high office of Chairman. My delegation is convinced that your election is a wise step, and it has no doubt whatsoever that you will guide the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

34. My delegation also considers it fitting and proper to congratulate the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur on their election to their respective offices. We have no doubt that they will both contribute in no small way to the success of this Committee's work.

35. The subject-matter of our discussions is of considerable importance, since it deals with international co-operation in an area that could be very sensitive, for reasons which are so obvious that they need not be detailed here.

36. Only two days ago, the Soviet automatic station Venus 4 entered the atmosphere of the planet Venus and made a soft landing on its surface. My delegation congratulates the Soviet Union on such a signal success.

37. My delegation also congratulates countries like the United States and France which, like the Soviet Union, have given so much in terms of life, time, money and efforts in order to realize the success that they have all achieved in the exploration of outer space.

38. As a developing country Sierra Leone is anxious to see a universally acceptable definition of outer space decided upon. Unless such a definition is decided upon, my delegation thinks that a lot of time and effort on

deliberations on the subject of outer space may be made abortive. Such a definition is so important that everything possible should be done to arrive at one.

39. While it is true that developing countries have gained and are likely to continue gaining advantages resulting from the exploration of outer space, it is nevertheless of supreme importance that they receive adequate protection from any mishaps that might result from man's activities in outer space. To my delegation the need for such protection cannot be overemphasized since it may be necessary even for their national survival.

40. My delegation approves of the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Currently, there are numerous issues of singular importance that have to be discussed in the Legal Sub-Committee.

41. My Government, realizing the importance of the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, signed and ratified that Treaty, which is a move along the right path.

42. The improvements made in the means of mass communications and in meteorology as well as the increase in man's knowledge concerning the vast horizons that lie beyond our planet are such that nothing destructive should be done to dampen these and other advantages.

43. This is why my delegation is seizing this opportunity of recording its gratitude to the Austrian Government for placing its national capital at the disposal of this world body for the convening of a conference on outer space scheduled to be held in 1968. We have no reason for doubting that this conference will be a success.

44. Mr. MENDELEVITCH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): May I, on behalf of the Soviet delegation, thank all the members of the Committee and all the delegations which have congratulated us on the successful conclusion of the space flight of Venus 4 and its landing on the surface of the planet Venus. I should like to assure all delegations that their congratulations will be duly transmitted to the Soviet Government and to the Soviet scientists and technicians whose work and skill brought about the flight of this space laboratory to Venus and its landing on the surface of that planet.

45. For the first time in the history of mankind it has been possible to obtain reliable scientific information at first hand on the physical conditions obtaining on the surface of the planet Venus, the "morning star" as it is called by the poets, or the "earth's sister" as the science fiction writers call it, or again the "second planet of the solar system" as the astronomers more prosaically refer to it.

46. Man's intellect has taken another giant step on its long road from ignorance towards knowledge, which will eventually lead to full control of the forces of nature for the benefit of the whole of mankind. We can be sure that this step will be followed by others. In this connexion, the

Soviet delegation would request the United States delegation to convey our congratulations to American scientists and technicians who organized the flight of the space ship "Mariner 5" close to Venus. The landing of a scientific laboratory on the surface of Venus will always remain in human memory as an outstanding event marking an important milestone in the history of civilization.

47. In congratulating our delegation, and through us the Soviet scientists, engineers and technicians, certain delegations have drawn attention to the fact that while the first decade of the space age began with the flight of the first artificial satellite, the second decade has begun with the landing of a space laboratory on the surface of Venus.

48. In that connexion the representative of Italy has expressed the wish that the second decade of the space age should run its course under the sign of Venus, in conditions of greater beauty and greater love, so that during that decade mankind may draw closer to the realization of its dream of a stable peace on earth.

49. The Soviet delegation would like to reaffirm the aims of our country's policy, as frequently announced in the past, namely to promote in every way the strengthening of universal peace, resist any acts of aggression, to work for the limitation of the arms race, more particularly the nuclear arms race, and for disarmament, and to bring about as quickly as possible the total elimination of the colonial system on our planet. Such are the aims of all the foreign policy activities of our country, including our work in the United Nations and at this session of the General Assembly. We are working and shall work along those lines and, together with all other peace-loving States and peoples, we shall work in every way we can towards the fulfilment of those tasks.

50. The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further speakers on my list and as no delegations wish to speak I shall take it that the general debate on item 32 has been concluded.

51. Consultations on the draft resolutions are being held. Consequently, the Committee will not be able to take up the draft resolutions before Monday, or perhaps Tuesday. If there is no objection, the Committee will suspend the discussion of item 32 until the draft resolutions are finally before the Committee.

Organization of work

52. The CHAIRMAN: I have to remind the members of the Committee of the statement I made at the very end of our 1496th meeting. In accordance with the position which the Chair then took and which was upheld with no objection, I should like to inform the Committee of my intention to propose that the next item be item 91, namely, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.