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A/AC.105/C.1/2005/CRP.17
1 March 2005

Original: English

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF
OUTER SPACE
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Forty-second session
Vienna, 21 February-4 March 2005
Agenda item 11
Space-system-based disaster management support

Draft terms of reference for the ad hoc expert group that will study the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should coordinate the organization of the work involved in preparing the study on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management.*
2. The Committee also agreed that, during the forty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, under the agenda item entitled "Space-system-based disaster management support", the Office should report to the Subcommittee on the status of the preparation of the study, to indicate whether the study could be completed in time for submission to the Committee at its forty-eighth session and the level of voluntary contributions received in that regard.
3. The Committee agreed that the Office should also submit to the Subcommittee, for its review and approval, draft terms of reference for the ad hoc expert group that will carry out the study, and propose how the study might be reviewed by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for a decision to be made by the Committee. On the basis of the report by the Office, the Subcommittee may provide further guidance on the preparation of the study.

* See *Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III): Note by the Secretary-General*, document A/59/174.

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4. The following note contains the draft terms of reference for the ad hoc expert group, as agreed upon during the meetings of the ad hoc group that took place on Friday, 25 February and Monday, 28 February, in Vienna.

Draft Terms of Reference for the ad hoc expert group to conduct a study on the possibility of creating a disaster management international space coordination entity

Background:

The final report of the Action Team on Disaster Management, one of 12 action teams established by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in order to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), was submitted to the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in February 2004, and was subsequently endorsed by the forty-seventh session of the Committee, in June 2004.

In October 2004, the General Assembly reviewed the degree to which the recommendations of UNISPACE III had been implemented, and endorsed the Plan of Action contained in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly for that review (A/59/174, Chapter VI).

Mandate:

In its resolution 59/2 of 20 October 2004, the General Assembly agreed that a study should be conducted on the possibility of creating an international entity to provide for coordination and the means of realistically optimizing the effectiveness of space-based services for use in disaster management and that the study should be prepared by an ad hoc expert group, with experts to be provided by interested Members States and relevant international organizations.

The Assembly also requested the Committee to review the progress in the work of the ad hoc expert group, at its forty-eighth session, in June 2005.

Goals:

The goals of the ad hoc expert group are as follows:

- a) Review the assessments of the Action Team on Disaster Management and other relevant needs assessments of existing organizations and programmes that support the use of space-based assets for all phases of disaster management, and based on those assessments, and previous analyses by the Action Team, review the gaps in service and products;
- b) Define the key functions of a possible Disaster Management International Space Coordination (DMISCO) entity that would address gaps (e.g. information, infrastructure) in all phases of a disaster. The study should also describe the benefits that such an entity would provide to the disaster management community;

- c) Address the capacity-building of relevant disaster management authorities to use space technology by:
- Raising awareness of all stakeholders;
 - Encouraging education and training services (mainly for developing countries); and
 - Disseminating knowledge.
- d) Define the scope and nature of the entity:
- Type of organization (e.g. intergovernmental body or not), coordinating mechanism or other structure
 - Relationship with other disaster management organizations, such as the International Charter “Space and Major Disasters” and the Group on Earth Observations
 - Relationship with Member States and relevant international organizations
- e) Define funding mechanisms for the sustainability of the entity:
- Estimated cost of establishing and operating the entity
 - Funding sources and options
 - Intended use of funds
 - Recommend options on sustainable resources for space-system-based disaster management support
- f) Propose an implementation plan for the entity

Term:

6 Months

- Interim report to be submitted to the forty-eighth session of the Committee in June 2005
- Final report to be submitted in September 2005, in time for the 60th session of the General Assembly

Membership:

Open to experts from Member States and relevant international organizations

Decision:

Consensus

Working methods:

The ad hoc expert group will carry out its work through the following six sub-groups:

- Sub-group 1 (Functions and benefits): This sub-group will define the key functions of the entity, including the rationale behind its establishment and the potential benefits that it would provide to the disaster management community;
- Sub-group 2 (Governance – scope and nature): This sub-group will define the organizational structure of the entity, including issues of governance, authorities, relationship with existing international systems and activities, required human resources, etc.
- Sub-group 3 (Funding): This sub-group will study the funding requirements and estimated costs needed to set up and operate the entity. It will identify possible funding sources and define the intended use of the funds;
- Sub-group 4 (Case studies): This sub-group will create a case history of the benefits of using space technologies for disaster management, and based on that document, will establish a sample product catalogue;
- Sub-group 5 (Earth observation data website): This sub-group will cooperate with the Office for Outer Space Affairs in defining the establishment of pages on the website of the Office for improved access to Earth observation data archives; and
- Sub-group 6 (Implementation plan): This sub-group will build on the studies carried out by the other sub-groups and would prepare details on the future implementation of actions called for in the report.

The ad hoc group will be led by a Steering Committee, consisting of the leaders of the sub-groups, and the representatives of Canada, China and France – the co-chairs of the Action Team on Disaster Management, as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs. The Office will also provide secretarial support to the ad hoc group.

The ad hoc group will carry out its work electronically (by e-mail) and through teleconferences, as and when necessary. The ad hoc group will meet, if needed, before June 2005 to finalize the draft interim report and also on the margins of the forty-eighth session of the Committee, in June 2005, as well as during activities of other space organizations.