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English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**

Legal Subcommittee

Fifty-first session

Vienna, 19-30 March 2012

**Proposals to the Committee on new items for
consideration by the Subcommittee**

**Review of the international mechanisms for cooperation in
the peaceful exploration and use of outer space**

**Proposal by China, Ecuador, Japan, Peru, Saudi Arabia and the
United States, on a new agenda item to be considered under a
multi-year workplan**

It is proposed that the Legal Subcommittee add to its agenda a new item under a multi-year work plan on “Review of International Mechanisms for Cooperation in the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space.”

The General Assembly’s Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries (Resolution 51/122; 4 February 1996) states: “The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be strengthened in its role, among others, as a forum for the exchange of information on national and international activities in the field of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space.” The Resolution further declares that “[i]nternational cooperation should be conducted in the modes that are considered most effective and appropriate by the countries concerned, including, inter alia, governmental and non-governmental; commercial and non-commercial; global, multilateral, regional or bilateral; and international cooperation among countries in all levels of development.” It also recognizes that the countries concerned “are free to determine all aspects of their participation in international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis.” The importance of the Declaration was underscored in “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development” issued on the occasion of Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), 30 July, 1999.

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Since the first meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space more than 50 years ago, Member States and international organizations have acted collectively to promote the peaceful exploration and use of outer space through a variety of mechanisms. These include the United Nations outer space treaties, associated non-binding principles and technical guidelines, bilateral and multilateral agreements and non-binding arrangements, informal coordination groups, and regional conferences. It would be useful for the Subcommittee to take stock of the various mechanisms employed by Member States to conduct international collaboration with a view to identifying common principles and procedures. This information could be helpful to Member States as they choose relevant mechanisms to facilitate future cooperative endeavours. This topic could be closely linked to the existing item on capacity-building in space law in order to give member States a better understanding of possible collaborative models.

The multi-year work plan would be as follows:

Year 1 – Exchange of information on the range of existing international space cooperation mechanisms. Member States and permanent observers would be invited to provide information prior to the session of the Legal Subcommittee and to make special presentations on the range of bilateral and multilateral mechanisms they utilize for space cooperation.

Year 2 – Continue the exchange of information. Establish a working group. Request the Secretariat to prepare a report categorizing the range of mechanisms for international cooperation — including existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, non-binding arrangements, principles, technical guidelines, and other cooperative mechanisms — based upon submissions by Member States as well as additional research, to be distributed to Member States in advance of the session of the Legal Subcommittee.

Year 3 – Exchange of additional or supplemental information on existing international space cooperation mechanisms, taking into account the report by the Secretariat. Examination in the working group of the submissions provided in order to develop an understanding of the range of collaborative mechanisms employed by States and international organizations, and the circumstances in which certain classes of mechanisms are favoured by States over other mechanisms. Request the Secretariat to prepare a report identifying the legal issues commonly addressed in the existing agreements relevant to international space cooperation, based upon submissions by Member States, additional research, and consultation with Member States. This report should be distributed to Member States in advance of the session of the Legal Subcommittee.

Year 4 – Working Group reviews the report by the Secretariat, continues to examine responses received from Member States, and begins drafting its report.

Year 5 – Working Group finalizes its report to the Subcommittee, including conclusions.