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Committee on the Peaceful

Uses of Outer Space

Legal Subcommittee

Forty-second session

Vienna, 24 March-4 April 2003

Agenda item 9

Proposals to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for new items to be considered by the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-third session

New agenda item on the regulation of remote sensing by satellite

Working paper submitted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico

1. At the forty-first session of the Legal Subcommittee, in 2002, Brazil and Greece presented a proposal to include a new item in the agenda of the Subcommittee, entitled "Discussion on the development of an international convention on remote sensing" (see A/AC.105/787, para. 141).
2. Although the proposal received the support of several delegations, a consensus on its inclusion in the agenda was not reached at that session of the Legal Subcommittee.
3. The development of an international convention on remote sensing is necessary for the updating of the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 41/65, annex) and for the development of rules relating to new situations that have resulted from technological innovation and commercial applications of remote sensing activities.
4. It is widely recognized that several of the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space are out of date owing to technological innovation, new commercial applications, the participation of private companies in space activities, as well as new economic and political developments.
5. One significant change to be taken into account is the fact that high-resolution images (1 metre and less), until recently used exclusively by armed forces, are now sold worldwide.



6. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its thirty-ninth session, in 2002, emphasized in its report (A/AC.105/786, para. 59) the importance of providing non-discriminatory access to state-of-the-art remote sensing data and to derived information at reasonable cost and in a timely manner and of building capacity in the adoption and use of remote sensing technology, in particular to meet the needs of developing countries.

7. The co-sponsors of the present working paper believe that there are strong reasons for including this new item, "Discussion on the development of an international convention on remote sensing", in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee.
