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## Committee on the Peaceful

### Uses of Outer Space

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

### Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)

## Draft report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)\*\*

### I. Introduction

1. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was convened at the threshold of a new millennium, one that presented significant opportunities for human development through advancement in space science and technology. However, the global community was also faced with unprecedented challenges to its goal of sustainable development. The States that participated in UNISPACE III resolved to strengthen cooperation to help meet those challenges and to maximize opportunities for human development through the use of space science and technology and their applications.

2. UNISPACE III addressed a broad range of subjects related to maximizing the benefits of space activities to meet the needs of people, particularly in developing countries, and to promote sustainable development to enhance the human condition in all countries. The States participating in UNISPACE III unanimously adopted a resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and

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\* A/AC.105/L.256.

\*\* The document was prepared following the conclusion of the second round of informal consultations by the working group established by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to prepare its report to the General Assembly for the review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.



Human Development”,<sup>1</sup> which contained the nucleus of a strategy to address global challenges in the future.

3. In its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, the General Assembly took note with satisfaction of the report of UNISPACE III and endorsed the Vienna Declaration. The Assembly recognized the contributions made by civil society, including non-governmental entities and the young generation, to the success of UNISPACE III.

## **A. Background to UNISPACE III**

4. The United Nations accorded importance to the promotion of international collaboration in space activities from as early as the beginning of the space age, which was marked by the successful launch of Sputnik I in 1957. The General Assembly established the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 1959.

5. The Committee, with its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee, has served as a focal point for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The Committee and its Legal Subcommittee have played a pivotal role in the development and adoption by the United Nations of the five outer space treaties and the five sets of legal principles and declarations, establishing the international legal regime governing outer space activities.<sup>2</sup>

6. The Committee has also played the key role in the organization of the United Nations global conferences on outer space. Many initiatives resulted from the United Nations conferences on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, which were held in 1968 and 1982. One of the most important outcomes was the creation and expansion of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.<sup>3</sup> Under the responsibility of the United Nations Expert on Space Applications, the Programme has carried out a wide range of activities to strengthen capacity, particularly of developing countries, to use and benefit from space science and technology and their applications.

7. One of the major accomplishments of the Programme, following the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), was the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education. International efforts led by the Programme resulted in the inauguration of the regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, in India in 1995, followed by the regional centres inaugurated in 1998 in Morocco, for French-speaking countries in Africa, in 1998 in Nigeria, for English-speaking countries in Africa, and in 2003 in Brazil and Mexico, for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

8. In the years that followed UNISPACE 82, applications and use of space technology forged rapidly ahead, with new technologies and techniques spawning both greater use and increased effectiveness of existing applications and creating new ones. The number of countries with space capabilities and countries that used space technology increased. There have also been major advances in space-based observations of the Earth’s atmosphere, oceans, surface and biosphere. Satellite communications have resulted in greater global interdependence and brought distant parts of the world closer together. In addition to services in the field of

transportation, new applications of global navigation satellite systems have emerged in such areas as surveying and mapping, Earth sciences, agriculture, environmental monitoring, disaster management, telecommunications and precision timing.

9. The emerging opportunities for greater cooperation in space activities led to the adoption by the General Assembly in 1996 of the 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.<sup>4</sup> The Declaration stresses that States are free to determine all aspects of their participation in international cooperation in space activities, to be carried out on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis, and recognizes commercial space activities as a mode for international cooperation.

10. At the same time, the Committee has recognized the increasing challenges faced by humanity. Rapid population growth, resulting in the expansion of human activities, in particular industrial activities, and in increasing demands to meet the basic needs of people, continues to have an adverse impact on the condition of the planet Earth. Consequences include land and coastal degradation, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, deforestation and degradation of living conditions. Many people, in particular in developing countries where lives depend on natural resources, are caught in a vicious circle of environmental degradation and poverty. Globally, the health of more than a billion people is affected each year by infectious diseases, some of which are sensitive to weather variability and global climate change. Hundreds of natural disasters have affected populations in many countries around the world every year, causing considerable damage. Their impact on the developing countries has been particularly severe. In some instances, disasters have destroyed in a matter of minutes all the progress that a developing country made in social and economic development over a period of years. While the revolution in information and communication technologies has led to many positive effects, the international community has become increasingly concerned that it could lead to widening the gap between those who use the technologies and those who do not. These challenges were addressed in the series of United Nations global conferences held in the 1990s and in the early 2000s, which repeatedly stressed the importance of sustainable development of all humanity.

11. The Committee has recognized that improved space capabilities and increasing opportunities for international cooperation could assist humanity in dealing with those challenges. This led to the decision taken by the General Assembly in 1997 to convene UNISPACE III, under the theme “Space Benefits for Humanity in the Twenty-first Century”, to address the challenges being faced by humanity and to take advantage of new opportunities through international cooperation in space activities.

12. The primary objectives of UNISPACE III were:

(a) To promote effective means of using space solutions to address problems of regional or global significance;

(b) To strengthen the capabilities of Member States, especially developing countries, to use the results of space research for economic and cultural development;

(c) To enhance international cooperation in space science and technology and its applications.

13. In the preparations for UNISPACE III, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee acted respectively as the Preparatory Committee and the Advisory Committee. The regional preparatory conferences, held in Kuala Lumpur in May 1998 for Asia and the Pacific; in Rabat in October 1998 for Africa and Western Asia; in Concepción, Chile, in October 1998 for Latin America and the Caribbean; and in Bucharest in January 1999 for Eastern Europe, also played an important role. Organized within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the regional conferences provided opportunities to States that were not members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to become aware of the objectives to be pursued and issues to be discussed at UNISPACE III. More importantly, the regional conferences served to consolidate regional inputs that were reflected in the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Office for Outer Space Affairs, which serves the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, acted as the executive secretariat of UNISPACE III.

## **B. Unique organizational aspects of UNISPACE III**

14. The Committee stressed that the Conference should yield concrete results and that realistic and feasible follow-up activities should be planned to implement recommendations arising out of the Conference. To that end, it was agreed that the recommendations should be sharply focused and limited in number, while indicating well-defined goals.

15. The agenda of UNISPACE III covered a wide range of thematic areas where space science and technology and their applications could contribute to promoting sustainable development and enhancing the human condition. UNISPACE III addressed scientific knowledge of the Earth and its environment and the practical applications of space science and technology, while stressing the importance of education and training, of promoting economic and societal benefits, including commercial benefits, and of furthering international cooperation, including the review of the status of international space law.

16. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, encouraged entities of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations with space-related activities, space-related industries, as well as young professionals and university students to contribute actively to achieving the objectives of UNISPACE III.

17. Space agencies, entities of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in space-related activities contributed to achieving the objectives of UNISPACE III by addressing various technical issues and policy matters and making recommendations to the main committees through the Technical Forum, which was one of the main bodies of UNISPACE III. The Technical Forum held some 40 workshops, seminars, round-table meetings, special sessions and discussion panels. Its activities included the Space Generation Forum, a global forum organized for and by young professionals and university students interested in space activities. The Technical Forum was open to all UNISPACE III participants and offered a unique opportunity for government representatives,

industry managers, researchers and university students freely to exchange ideas and views.

18. UNISPACE III was convened as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, open to all Member States. Organizing costs were kept to a minimum and no separate conference budget was requested. In the years preceding UNISPACE III, cost-saving measures were introduced by the Committee, including shortening of some of the annual sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and utilization of unedited verbatim transcripts in lieu of verbatim and summary records. Austria, as the host country, made a significant contribution by covering the costs for meeting facilities and services. The capacity of the executive secretariat was also augmented by volunteer interns and by cash and in-kind voluntary contributions from member States and space-related international organizations and industries. Details of the unique organizational aspects of UNISPACE III can be found in a report on the organizational matters relating to the holding of UNISPACE III (see A/C.4/54/9), which was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

### **C. Results of UNISPACE III**

19. UNISPACE III was attended by more than 2,500 participants, including representatives of 100 States and 30 international organizations and representatives from the private sector.

20. The most important result of UNISPACE III was the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development. In that Declaration, UNISPACE III recommended 33 specific actions that should be taken by the international community to meet the global challenges in protecting the Earth's environment and managing its resources, using space applications for human security, development and welfare, advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment, enhancing education and training opportunities and ensuring public awareness of the importance of space activities, strengthening and repositioning space activities in the United Nations system and promoting international cooperation.

21. In the Vienna Declaration, UNISPACE III also invited the General Assembly to declare the period 4 to 10 October each year as World Space Week, in order to celebrate at the international level each year the contributions that space science and technology can make to the betterment of the human condition.

22. In its resolution 54/68, the General Assembly endorsed the Vienna Declaration as adopted by UNISPACE III. The Assembly urged Governments, and organs, organizations and programmes within the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and industries engaged in space-related activities, to take the action necessary for the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration. The Assembly also agreed that it would appraise and review, at its session in 2004, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III and consider further actions and initiatives.

## **II. Mechanisms for implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III**

23. As early as 1999, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space considered and agreed upon a measure to reflect the outcome of UNISPACE III in the future work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. The Committee recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee reconvene its Working Group of the Whole to assist the Subcommittee in considering its future work in the light of recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Committee also took an important step to facilitate consideration by its subcommittees of new issues following the outcome of UNISPACE III, adopting a revised structure of the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee.<sup>5</sup>

### **A. Revised structure of the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee**

24. At its session in 1999, immediately preceding UNISPACE III, the Committee revised the structure of the agendas of its subcommittees. The revised structure has enabled the subcommittees to introduce new agenda items either under multi-year work plans with objectives to be achieved within a fixed time period or as single issues or items for discussion, to be considered for one session only.

25. At its session following UNISPACE III, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agreed that the revised structure of its agenda would facilitate the consideration of the 33 specific actions contained in the Vienna Declaration that addressed global challenges. The Subcommittee agreed to consider those issues under multi-year work plans.

### **B. Plan of action of the Office for Outer Space Affairs**

26. In its resolution 54/68, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to recommend measures to ensure that the Office for Outer Space Affairs was provided with adequate resources to implement the actions listed in paragraph 13 of that resolution, based on the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In response to that request, the Office prepared its plan of action to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III and submitted its plan to the Committee in 2000 (see A/AC.105/L.224).

27. The plan of action submitted by the Office consisted of measures to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III in the following areas: (a) strengthening the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees in promoting international cooperation in the use of outer space; (b) initiating a capacity-building programme in areas relating to space law; (c) strengthening the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications by increasing synergy among the major components of the Programme, such as the organization of workshops and training courses, provision of technical advisory services, including support to the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated with the United Nations, and administration of long-term fellowship

programmes; (d) promoting the use of space technologies within the United Nations system; (e) establishing and strengthening partnership with industry; (f) strengthening partnership with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; (g) initiating a public outreach programme and a programme for young people; and (h) strengthening publication and information services. The Committee, at its session in 2000, endorsed the plan of action proposed by the Office and recommended its implementation.

28. In its resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure the full implementation of the plan with the necessary resources in 2002. Subsequently, all the measures contained in the plan of action were included in the programme of work of the Office for the biennium 2002-2003 (see A/56/6 (Sect. 6)).

### **C. Establishment of action teams**

29. In 2001, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee agreed that the recommendations of UNISPACE III could be assessed and implemented through voluntary leadership by individual Member States and their appropriate governmental institutions in relation to specific actions listed in the Vienna Declaration. The Subcommittee also agreed that the leaders would conduct discussions within their teams to seek the broadest possible participation of non-governmental entities. Noting that 33 actions were recommended in the Vienna Declaration as elements of a strategy to address global challenges in the future, the Subcommittee agreed to conduct a survey among Member States to identify their level of interest and priority for each action. Through the survey, each Member State was invited to indicate whether it wished to be the leader or a member of the team to carry out the recommended action. Each Member State was also invited to identify non-governmental entities that wished to be members of the team. The Office for Outer Space Affairs compiled the results of the survey for consideration by the Committee at its session in 2001.

30. On the basis of the results of the survey, conducted in early 2001, the Committee established 11 action teams to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III that had been accorded highest priority by Member States or for which there had been an offer by a Member State to lead associated activities. The Committee established the twelfth action team at its session in 2003. The action teams established by the Committee, their chairs and the number of countries and organizations that are members of the action teams are indicated in the table below. By the end of 2003, 51 countries, 15 entities of the United Nations system, 10 international organizations that have observer status with the Committee and 13 other intergovernmental and non-governmental entities had participated as members in one or more action teams. The full list of the membership of all the action teams is contained in annex [...]\*

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\* The annex to be attached to the final report of the Committee is contained in draft form in document A/AC.105/L.255/Add.6, annex IV.

Table  
**Action teams established by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

	<i>Recommendation<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Chair(s)</i>	<i>Number of countries and organizations that are members of the action team (as at 1 April 2004)</i>	
			<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organizations</i>
1	Develop a comprehensive, worldwide environmental monitoring strategy	Iran (Islamic Republic of), Russian Federation and Syrian Arab Republic	23	11
2	Improve the management of the Earth's natural resources	India	27	6
4	Enhance weather and climate forecasting	Portugal and World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	25	5
6	Improve public health services	Canada	19	8
7	Implement an integrated, global system to manage natural disaster mitigation, relief and prevention efforts	Canada, China and France	41	15
9	Improve knowledge-sharing through the promotion of universal access to space-based communication services	Malaysia and Greece	10	1
10	Improve universal access to and compatibility of space-based navigation and positioning systems	United States of America and Italy	38	14
11	Promote sustainable development by applying the results of space research	Nigeria	27	8
14	Improve the international coordination of activities related to near-Earth objects	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	17	7
17	Enhance capacity-building by developing human and budgetary resources	Japan	25	7
18	Increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of space activities	United States and Austria	22	14
32	Identify new and innovative sources of financing to support the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III	France	14	6

<sup>a</sup> The recommendations have been numbered in accordance with their order of appearance in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by UNISPACE III.

31. The revised structure of the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee (see paragraphs 24 and 25 above) has enabled those bodies to provide policy guidelines to the action teams to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III. The action teams complemented the work conducted by the subsidiary bodies on the agenda items relating to the global challenges set forth in the Vienna Declaration.



## D. National efforts

32. In examining the proposals on the mechanism to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III in 2001, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee took into account the pivotal role of Governments. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space noted that some Governments were implementing various recommendations of UNISPACE III through the adoption of national space policies.<sup>6</sup> In 2003, the Committee also recalled that the responsibility to implement the recommendations rested with member States, the Office for Outer Space Affairs under the guidance of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, intergovernmental organizations for multilateral cooperation and other entities engaged in space-related activities.

33. Governments of Member States continue to play an essential role in ensuring the successful implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. Member States have contributed to the work of the Committee and its subcommittees at their annual sessions and to the work of the action teams. Some member States have also supported activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs aimed at implementing recommendations of UNISPACE III, within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. In addition, member States have taken action at the national level and in the context of international cooperation to implement some of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The list of documentation on action taken by member States, as received by the Secretariat, is contained in annex [...]\*

to the present report.

## E. Other mechanisms

34. In response to a call by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/68, some intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations<sup>7</sup> have taken initiatives to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III. Some organizations have convened international conferences to examine the recommendations of UNISPACE III and to identify possible follow-up action that they could take within their mandate. Further information on the activities of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as follow-up to UNISPACE III is contained in paragraphs [...] of the present report. A list of reports on mechanisms implemented by various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and their activities, as received by the Secretariat, is contained in annex [...]\*\* to the present report.

35. Some other organizations have also launched initiatives to implement recommendations of UNISPACE III. For example, in 2000, the International Astronautical Federation launched an initiative under the theme “Priorities for space activities in the twenty-first century” to engage non-governmental entities in the implementation of selected recommendations resulting from UNISPACE III. The Space Generation Advisory Council created teams to support the implementation of many of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration as well as the

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\* The annex to be attached to the final report of the Committee is contained in draft form in document A/AC.105/L.255/Add.6, annex III, part A.

\*\* The annex to be attached to the final report of the Committee is contained in draft form in document A/AC.105/L.255/Add.6, annex III, part B.

work of the action teams established by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

*Notes*

- <sup>1</sup> See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.
- <sup>2</sup> The five outer space treaties are the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Assembly resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (Assembly resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Assembly resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Assembly resolution 34/68, annex); the five declarations and legal principles are the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space (Assembly resolution 1962 (XVIII)); the Principles Governing the Use by States of Artificial Earth Satellites for International Direct Television Broadcasting (Assembly resolution 37/92, annex); the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space (Assembly resolution 41/65, annex); the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space (Assembly resolution 47/68) and the 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 (Assembly resolution 51/122, annex).
- <sup>3</sup> UNISPACE 82 expanded the mandate of the Programme to include, in particular, the following elements: (a) promotion of greater exchange of actual experiences with specific applications; (b) promotion of greater cooperation in space science and technology between developed and developing countries and among developing countries; (c) development of a fellowship programme for in-depth training of space technologists and applications specialists; (d) organization of seminars on advanced space applications and new system developments for managers and leaders of space application and technology development activities as well as seminars for users in specific applications; (e) stimulation of the growth of indigenous nuclei and an autonomous technological base, with the cooperation of other United Nations organizations and/or States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies; (f) dissemination of information on new and advanced technology and applications; (g) provision or arrangements for provision of technical advisory services on space applications projects, upon request by Member States or any of the specialized agencies.
- <sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 51/122, annex.
- <sup>5</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20 and corrigendum (A/54/20 and Corr.1)*, annex I.
- <sup>6</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/57/20)*, para. 47.
- <sup>7</sup> The following 21 entities of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations reported on their activities that contributed to implementing recommendations of UNISPACE III: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Office for Project Services, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization, Regional Centre for Remote Sensing of the North African States, Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, Committee on Space Research, European

Association for the International Space Year, European Space Agency, Space Generation Advisory Council, International Astronautical Federation, International Astronomical Union, International Law Association, International Organization of Space Communications and International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing.

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