



General Assembly

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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Fifty-first session
Vienna, 11-20 June 2008

Draft report

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held its fifty-first session in Vienna from 11 to 20 June 2008. The officers of the Committee were as follows:

<i>Chairman:</i>	Ciro Arévalo Yepes (Colombia)
<i>First Vice-Chairman:</i>	Suvit Vibulsresth (Thailand)
<i>Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur:</i>	Filipe Duarte Santos (Portugal)

The unedited verbatim transcripts of the meetings of the Committee are contained in documents COPUOS/T.____.

A. Meetings of subsidiary bodies

2. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had held its forty-fifth session in Vienna from 11 to 22 February 2008, under the chairmanship of Aboubekr Seddik Kedjar (Algeria). The report of the Subcommittee was before the Committee (A/AC.105/911).

3. The Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had held its forty-seventh session in Vienna from 31 March to 11 April 2008, under the chairmanship of Vladimír Kopal (Czech Republic). The report of the Subcommittee was before the Committee (A/AC.105/917). The unedited verbatim transcripts of the meetings of the Subcommittee are contained in documents COPUOS/Legal/T.____.



B. Adoption of the agenda

4. At its opening meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Opening of the session.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Election of officers.
 4. Statement by the Chairman.
 5. General exchange of views.
 6. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.
 7. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).
 8. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-fifth session.
 9. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its forty-seventh session.
 10. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
 11. Space and society.
 12. Space and water.
 13. International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development.
 14. Other matters.
 15. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

C. Membership

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1472 A (XIV) of 12 December 1959, 1721 E (XVI) of 20 December 1961, 3182 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, 32/196 B of 20 December 1977, 35/16 of 3 November 1980, 49/33 of 9 December 1994, 56/51 of 10 December 2001, 57/116 of 11 December 2002 and 59/116 of 10 December 2004 and decision 45/315 of 11 December 1990, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was composed of the following 69 States: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

D. Attendance

6. Representatives of the following 57 States members of the Committee attended the session: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

7. At its 582nd and 585th meetings, the Committee decided to invite, at their request, observers for Angola, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and Yemen, as well as the Holy See, to attend its fifty-first session and to address it, as appropriate, on the understanding that it would be without prejudice to further requests of that nature and that it would not involve any decision of the Committee concerning status.

8. Observers for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the Secretariat, the United Nations University, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) attended the session.

9. The session was also attended by observers for the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS), the Association of Space Explorers (ASE), the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), the Regional Centre for Remote Sensing of North African States (CRTEAN), the European Commission, the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO), the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI), EURISY, the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the International Institute of Space Law (IISL), the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the International Space University (ISU), the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water (PSIPW), the Secure World Foundation (SWF), the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) and the World Space Week Association (WSWA).

10. A list of representatives of States members of the Committee, States not members of the Committee, United Nations entities and other organizations attending the session is contained in document A/AC.105/2008/INF/1.

E. General statements

11. Statements were made by representatives of the following States members of the Committee during the general exchange of views: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Ukraine, United States, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam. The representative of Argentina made a statement on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Statements were also made by the observers for ESO, IAA, IAF, IISL, SGAC and SWF.

12. The Committee welcomed *Ciro Arévalo Yepes* (Colombia) as its Chairman, *Suvit Vibulsresth* (Thailand) as its First Vice-Chairman and *Filipe Duarte Santos* (Portugal) as its Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur. The Committee thanked *Gérard Brachet* (France) for his outstanding contribution during his term as Chairman, and *Elod Both* (Hungary) and *Paul R. Tiendrébéogo* (Burkino Faso) for their fine work during their terms as First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur respectively.

13. The Committee welcomed Bolivia and Switzerland as new members and noted their active participation in the Committee and its Subcommittees during their first year of membership. The Committee also welcomed AOCRS as a new permanent observer.

14. The Committee expressed its condolences to the Governments of China and Myanmar for the loss of human life and property resulting from the recent natural disasters in their countries.

15. At the 582nd meeting, on 11 June, the Chairman made a statement outlining the work of the Committee at its current session. The Chairman laid stress on the major role played by the Committee in shaping international standards for space activities in many areas and stated that it was important to further strengthen that successful role of the Committee in order to make the benefits of space technology available to the whole of humanity and to ensure sustainable development.

16. Also at the 582nd meeting, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat made a statement in which she reviewed the work carried out by the Office during the previous year, including maintaining the United Nations Register on Objects Launched into Outer Space, capacity-building in space law, outreach activities and cooperation and coordination with United Nations entities and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

17. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Director for the services provided and the work conducted by the Office in the previous year, and welcomed her in her new role as Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

18. The Committee was informed that, on 20 February 2008, the United States had successfully intercepted USA 193, an inoperable satellite of the National Reconnaissance Office of the United States, which had been in its final orbit before making what would have been an uncontrolled re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere,

and that almost all of the resultant space debris had fallen to Earth and had not survived re-entry. The Committee was also informed of the notifications given prior to and after the interception, including at the sessions of its two Subcommittees.

19. The Committee heard a presentation given by S. Dale, Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of NASA, which included a film entitled "Fifty years of exploration: the golden anniversary of NASA". The Committee expressed its appreciation to the delegation of the United States for its gift of copies of a book entitled *America in Space* to the delegation of each member State of the Committee.

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee

20. After considering the various items before it, the Committee, at its ___ meeting, on ___ June, adopted its report to the General Assembly containing the recommendations and decisions set out below.

Chapter II

Recommendations and decisions

A. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes

21. In accordance with paragraph 43 of General Assembly resolution 62/217 of 22 December 2007, the Committee continued its consideration, as a matter of priority, of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

22. The representatives of Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Ukraine, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements during the discussion on this item. During the general exchange of views, statements were also made on this item by representatives of other member States.

23. The Committee heard a presentation on "European space policy", by H-D. Dage (European Commission).

24. The Committee noted with satisfaction the agreement of the General Assembly that, during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could continue to consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas, the African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development and the role that space technology could play in the implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.¹

25. The Committee was of the view that, through its work in the scientific, technical and legal fields, the Committee had a fundamental role to play in ensuring that outer space was maintained for peaceful purposes. That role could be

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum).

strengthened by new initiatives, as well as by continued progress in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

26. The Committee noted with satisfaction the work that had been carried out by the pro tempore secretariat of the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, established by the Government of Ecuador to carry out the plan of action of the Conference, and that preparations were being undertaken for the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Guatemala in 2009. In that regard, the Committee noted that a meeting had been held in Quito on 13 and 14 December 2007 with representatives of the Governments of Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala, the International Group of Experts of the Space Conferences of the Americas and the Office for Outer Space Affairs; the meeting had resulted in a set of recommendations for the preparation of the Sixth Conference. A second meeting was to be held in Ecuador from 30 July to 1 August 2008, in conjunction with a regional seminar on space law.

27. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the Second African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development had been held in Pretoria from 2 to 5 October 2007, with a focus on capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and the joint participation of African countries in mutually beneficial projects in the area of space science and technology for sustainable development, and that the Third African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development would be held in Algeria in 2009.

28. The Committee noted the important role played by those conferences and other initiatives in promoting regional and international partnerships among States, such as the 2008 International Air and Space Fair, held in Santiago from 31 March to 6 April 2008; the fourteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, held in Bangalore, India, from 21 to 23 November 2007; and the ongoing preparations for the fifteenth session of the Forum, to be held in Hanoi and Ha Long Bay, Viet Nam, from 10 to 12 December 2008.

29. The Committee emphasized that regional and international cooperation in the field of space activities was essential to strengthen the peaceful use of outer space, to assist States in the development of their space capabilities and to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2).²

30. The view was expressed that, with regard to the need to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes, the Committee should play a key role by disseminating information on and promoting the peaceful uses of outer space and by continuing to contribute to consolidating and perfecting the ethical principles and legal instruments that could guarantee the non-discriminatory use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

31. The view was expressed that, in order to maintain the peaceful, responsible and international character of the space field, the Committee should promote greater transparency in the space activities being undertaken by various States.

² See A/56/326, annex, and A/58/323, annex.

32. Some delegations were of the view that the best way to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes was to strengthen international cooperation, in particular with respect to the safety and security of space assets.
33. The view was expressed that, in order to achieve sustainability in space cooperation, the capacity-building of countries, in particular developing countries, in space technology and its applications should be considered a priority matter.
34. The view was expressed that the Committee played an important role in advancing space cooperation, provided a unique forum for the exchange of information among States and offered real opportunities to enhance international cooperation, in keeping with the its mandate.
35. Some delegations were of the view that climate change had an impact on international stability and security and that that issue should be considered within the framework of the programme of work of the Committee.
36. The view was expressed that, in order to further the objective of promoting the peaceful uses of outer space, the limited resources of outer space, such as geostationary orbital positions, should be shared equitably among countries.
37. Some delegations expressed the view that the militarization of outer space would undermine the peaceful use of outer space for sustainable development.
38. The view was expressed that calls for the placement of weapons in outer space would inevitably lead to suspicion and tension among States and the destruction of a climate of trust and cooperation and that, therefore, the discussions of the Committee on maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes should continue to be held.
39. Some delegations were of the view that the Committee should play a more active role in the development of a concrete legal regime that could effectively prevent an arms race in outer space.
40. Some delegations were of the view that formal and informal means should be identified to promote communication between the Committee and the Conference on Disarmament.
41. The view was expressed that the Committee had been created exclusively to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and that disarmament issues were more appropriately dealt with in other forums, such as the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament.
42. The Committee noted that, on 12 February 2008, China and the Russian Federation had presented to the Conference on Disarmament a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects.
43. The Committee recommended that, at its fifty-second session, in 2009, it should continue its consideration, on a priority basis, of the item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

B. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

44. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/217 of 22 December 2007, the Committee considered the item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

45. The representatives of Belgium, Chile, India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Ukraine and the United States made statements under the item. A statement was also made by the observer for ISU. Representatives of other member States also made statements relating to this item during the general exchange of views and during discussion on the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-fifth session.

46. The Committee had before it, for its consideration, a plan for its contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, including a template and guidelines for use by member States and permanent observers of the Committee in preparing inputs to the contribution of the Committee to the issues to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development in the period 2010-2011 (A/AC.105/2008/CRP.3).

47. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/217, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-fifth session, had reconvened the Working Group of the Whole to consider the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Chairman of the Working Group of the Whole was K. Radhakrishnan (India).

48. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Working Group of the Whole with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

49. The Committee heard the following presentations:

(a) "Space weather as a framework for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", by T. J. Bogdan (United States);

(b) "Food security and sustainable agriculture: bridging remote sensing and ground information for national and international policy actions", by M. Shah (IIASA).

50. The Committee emphasized the importance of implementing the Plan of Action contained in its report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III (A/59/174, sect. VI.B) and noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/2, the Committee should continue to consider, in its future sessions, the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III until the Committee considered that concrete results had been achieved.

51. The Committee noted with appreciation that Member States were also contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III through a number of national and regional activities and efforts, and that some Member States were contributing to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III through their participation in action teams established by the

Committee to implement those recommendations. In that regard, the Committee noted with satisfaction that the Action Team on Public Health had advanced its work by further enhancing its Web portal for facilitating the exchange of information and was identifying priorities for improving public health services at the regional level.

52. The Committee also noted with appreciation that Member States were implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III by, among other things, actively supporting and participating in the work related to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) 10-Year Implementation Plan.

53. The view was expressed that the Working Group of the Whole should focus its discussion on the implementation of the following three actions called for in the Plan of Action: maximizing the benefits of existing space capabilities for disaster management; maximizing the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) to support sustainable development; and enhancing capacity-building in space-related activities.

54. The view was expressed that the presence of non-governmental entities and the willingness of experts to make special presentations had enriched the Committee and its subcommittees, and that ultimate success in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III would depend on their continued involvement.

55. The view was expressed that, given that the tenth anniversary of UNISPACE III and the fifth anniversary of the UNISPACE III + 5 review were both to occur in 2009, the timing of future UNISPACE conferences merited consideration.

56. The Committee welcomed with satisfaction the link established between its work relating to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the work being carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development, and noted with appreciation that, following coordination between the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, a report on the contribution of the Committee to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development for the thematic cluster 2008-2009 (A/AC.105/892) had been circulated as a background paper at the sixteenth session of the Commission. The Committee also noted that the importance of the role of space technology applications in various areas of sustainable development had been mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review of implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: drought" (E/CN.17/2008/6, paras. 48 and 49).

57. The Committee noted that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/217, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs had attended the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and had made a statement during the thematic discussions on interlinkages and cross-cutting issues, highlighting the contribution of the Committee to the work of the Commission for the thematic cluster 2008-2009, with the objective of raising awareness of the role of space-based technologies and their applications in the thematic cluster areas under consideration: agriculture; land use and rural development; drought and desertification; and sustainable development in Africa.³

³ The statement is available on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (www.unoosa.org/oosa/OOSA/news/csd-16_2008.html).

58. The Committee agreed with the plan for its contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development for the thematic cluster 2010-2011 (A/AC.105/2008/CRP.3). The Committee further agreed that, in accordance with that plan, the Secretariat would send out requests to all member States and permanent observers of the Committee and, through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to United Nations entities for inputs to the contribution of the Committee to the issues to be addressed by the Commission in the period 2010-2011.

59. The Committee agreed that the contribution of the Committee should examine the areas of the thematic cluster in which space technology and its applications played a particularly important role; pay attention to the cross-cutting issues identified by the Commission; identify areas where space-based systems could complement terrestrial systems in order to promote integrated solutions; and include, as appropriate, national success stories and examples of regional and international cooperation.

60. The Committee agreed that the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should continue to be invited to participate in the sessions of the Committee to advise on how best it could contribute to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and that the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs should attend the sessions of the Commission with a view to raising awareness and promoting the benefits of space science and technology, in particular in the areas being addressed by the Commission.

61. The Committee requested the Secretariat to organize a panel discussion, to be chaired by the Chairman of the Committee, on the theme of space applications and food security, to be held in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, in 2008, when it considers the item on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

62. The Committee noted with appreciation that a report on the international celebration of World Space Week in 2007, prepared by WSWA in cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs, had been made available in a special publication (ST/SPACE/38).