



# General Assembly

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

### **Fifty-second session**

Vienna, 3-12 June 2009

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

### **Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-sixth session**

## **Proposal for the inclusion of a new item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, beginning at its forty-seventh session, in 2010**

### **Working paper submitted by France\*\***

1. As announced by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations (Vienna) during the general debate at the forty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in February 2009, France proposes that the Committee decide to include a new item on the agenda of the Subcommittee, beginning at its forty-seventh session, under a multi-year workplan.
2. The proposed title of the new item is “Long-term sustainability of outer space activities”.
3. The long-term sustainability of outer space activities is a matter of concern for space-faring nations and commercial satellite operators. The growing number of Government and private entities involved in space activities, the effect of space weather on satellites, the proliferation of space debris and the development of commercial manned space flights all raise the question of whether it will be possible to continue to operate in a safe space environment. In order to ensure the sustainability of space operations, complete, precise and rapidly accessible information on space objects in Earth orbit, the natural space environment and space-related risks is vital to all entities operating in space. Obtaining such

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information requires international efforts to be made in the areas of monitoring, communication and coordination.

4. At the initiative of France, an informal working group was established in 2008 comprising representatives of Member States, international governmental organizations, non-governmental entities and commercial telecommunications satellite operators. On the basis of the group's work, a preliminary issue paper has been prepared and will be made available to delegations at the fifty-second session of the Committee. In the paper, the issues affecting the long-term sustainability of space activities are examined and a number of initial ideas are set out for recommendations and ways to strengthen existing international mechanisms that could help ensure the long-term security and safety of outer space activities.

5. In order to pursue the ideas generated by the working group within the intergovernmental framework of the Committee, and thus engage all States members of the Committee, including their experts, and to carry out the most exhaustive analysis possible, France proposes that the issue be considered under a new item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, beginning at its forty-seventh session, in February 2010, given that the work to be done in the immediate term is essentially of a technical nature.

6. The work on the long-term sustainability of space activities would complement existing initiatives and take into account, as does the document prepared by the working group led by France, the results of the Committee's work in areas such as space weather and the reduction of space debris.

7. The new item could be considered in the framework of the following multi-year plan:

2010: Establishment of a working group to analyse the present and future challenges facing space activities and to examine measures that could potentially enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. In addition to Member States' proposals, the working group could consider the work of the informal group as the basis for its discussion and subsequent development of recommendations for the Subcommittee. It is suggested that international organizations working in the area of security and safety of space activities, as well as commercial satellite operators, be invited to participate in the working group.

2011: Continuation of the exchange of views among Member States within the working group, taking due account of the practice of interested private-sector entities regarding potential measures to enhance the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and preparation of a draft document entitled "Best practices for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities", based on the results of the work conducted in 2010 and 2011.

2012: Finalization of the document on best practices, for presentation to the Committee. Consideration by the Committee of whether the document should appear as an annex to a specific General Assembly resolution or should simply be endorsed by the Assembly as part of the annual resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.