



# General Assembly

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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space  
Fifty-sixth session  
Vienna, 12-21 June 2013**

## **Draft report**

### **Chapter II**

#### **Recommendations and decisions**

##### **G. Space and climate change**

1. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled “Space and climate change”, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/113.
2. The representatives of Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and the United States made statements under the item. A statement was also made by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.
3. The Committee heard the following presentations under the item:
  - (a) Methane Remote Sensing Lidar Mission (MERLIN), by the representatives of France and Germany;
  - (b) Health checkup of the Earth from space: “SHIZUKU” application, by the representative of Japan;
  - (c) Variability of the Sun and its Terrestrial Impact (varSITI) programme, by the observer for SCOSTEP.
4. The Committee noted that climate change was considered one of the greatest challenges of the present time and, as reflected in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled “The future we want”, a cross-cutting issue that was adversely affecting all regions of the world



through a variety of processes such as global warming, reduction in the sea ice coverage and ice masses, sea-level rise, changes in large-scale current systems in oceans, unstable weather conditions and more intense or extreme weather events such as storms, tropical cyclones, floods and droughts.

5. The Committee noted that satellite observations and space-derived data were indispensable tools to track climate change in its various manifestations and that, together with ground-based observations, these provided an integrated perspective on the changing environment of the Earth and an understanding of the implications of global climate change for humankind. In that regard, the Committee noted that satellite data were also crucial in the development of international assessments, such as climate assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and ozone assessment by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

6. The Committee noted the urgency of targeting climate change and the importance of international collaboration in providing ground-based and in-situ observations to complement, validate and enhance satellite data. In that regard, the Committee also noted that open access to reliable space-based Earth observation data would strengthen global efforts to combat and mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt to its effects.

7. The Committee noted that several member States had launched or planned launches of Earth observation satellites to track the manifestations and effects of climate change. The Committee also noted a number of cooperative efforts between the space agencies of several countries to launch satellites to monitor the impact of climate change and parameters related to it.

8. The Committee noted that at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Doha from 26 November to 8 December 2012, decision 1/CMP.8 entitled “Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol pursuant to its article 3, paragraph 9 (the Doha Amendment)”<sup>1</sup> was adopted, which included new commitments for Annex I parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2020.

9. The Committee noted that the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, held on 15 May 2013 in Sweden, in its declaration entitled “Vision for the Arctic”, recognized the uniqueness and fragility of the Arctic environment. The Committee also noted that non-Arctic States, including China, India, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore, had acquired the status of observer State in the Arctic Council, to help provide expertise regarding the particularly challenging effects of climate change in polar regions.

10. Some delegations described their efforts to support activities related to climate change conducted by the Group on Earth Observations, the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, the Global Climate Observing System and the Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites, and to contribute to the global climate change mitigation and adaptation actions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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<sup>1</sup> See FCCC/KP/CMP/2012/13/Add.1.

11. Some delegations expressed the view that it was necessary to support efforts conducted by WMO, including the Architecture for Climate Monitoring from Space and the Global Framework for Climate Services.
12. Some delegations described their efforts in using satellites as an indispensable tool for monitoring the emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols and several other essential climate variables, as well as the melting of glaciers, sea ice in the polar caps and the Greenland ice sheet, land-cover changes and sea-level rise.
13. Some delegations expressed the view that climate change had been provoking desertification, triggering disasters and exerting an impact on marine ecosystems and marine life, and that the effects of climate change extended to virtually all aspects of sustainable development.
14. The view was expressed that the scale and gravity of the negative impacts of climate change undermined the ability of all countries, and in particular the developing countries, to achieve sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals, and that combating climate change required immediate action, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## **I. Future role of the Committee**

15. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Future role of the Committee", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/113.
16. The Committee recalled its agreement at its fifty-fifth session to continue its consideration of the item at its fifty-sixth session, in 2013, for one year only.
17. The representatives of Chile, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan and Mexico made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States. The observer for ITU also made a statement under the item.
18. The Committee took note with appreciation of the discussion paper entitled "Next phase in global governance for space research and utilization" (A/AC.105/2013/CRP.10), which was submitted by the current Chair of the Committee and presented a revised and updated version of the paper submitted by the Chair of the Committee in 2012 (A/AC.105/2012/CRP.4).
19. The Chair of the Committee made a statement presenting the main elements in his paper and highlighted the aim of stimulating thought and promoting an open dialogue on various cross-cutting issues before the Committee. In that sense, the Chair pointed out three main pillars, namely, to strengthen the role of the Committee and its Subcommittees as a unique platform at the global level for international cooperation in space science and technology and long-term space utilization for the peaceful use of outer space; to promote greater dialogue between the Committee and regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms in space activities, in particular for sustainable development; and to stimulate the further advancement of space science and technology and their applications for the benefit of all humankind.

20. The Committee noted that many issues related to its future role had already been addressed under other agenda items and would therefore be reflected in other parts of the present report.
21. Some delegations expressed the view that the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee indeed constituted a unique common platform for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space at the global level, and therefore interaction between the three bodies on the cross-cutting issues before them should be intensified.
22. Some delegations expressed the view that it was important for the Committee and its Subcommittees to strengthen the setting of norms for space activities, in particular in view of the increasing presence of new actors in the space field, including private sector involvement.
23. The view was expressed that the Committee and its Subcommittees should be more active in promoting the implementation of the five United Nations treaties on outer space and facilitating consensus on matters relating to space law, be more effective in regulating new space activities, including for the protection of the space environment, and be more practical in promoting international cooperation in space activities.
24. The view was expressed that the global processes of implementing the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and preparing for the post-2015 development agenda needed the participation of all stakeholders in the space field and, in that context, the Committee and its Subcommittees had a responsibility to advance their common role in overall governance of space activities at the international level.
25. The view was expressed that in light of valuable achievements since the establishment of the Committee more than 50 years ago, the time had now come to enhance the future role of the Committee, by forming a dedicated working group to assess organizational requirements to suit its future vision and mission.
26. The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the item at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014, for one year only.

## **J. Other matters**

27. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Other matters", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/113.
28. The representatives of Chile, France, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States. The observers for Belarus and Ghana made statements. A statement was also made by the observer for ISNET.

### **1. Composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2014-2015**

29. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/113 and pursuant to the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary

bodies,<sup>2</sup> as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/56, the Committee considered the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2014-2015.

30. The Committee noted the nominations by the African States, the Eastern European States and the Western European and other States of their candidatures for the offices of Chair of the Committee, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Chair of the Legal Subcommittee, respectively (A/67/20, paras. 328, 330 and 331).

31. The Committee also noted that the Latin American and Caribbean States had decided that Ecuador would nominate its representative for the office of First Vice-Chair of the Committee for the period 2014-2015 (A/67/20, para. 329). In that regard, the Committee urged Ecuador to nominate its representative for that office before the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

32. The Committee urged the Asian States to nominate their candidate for the office of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee before the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

## **2. Membership of the Committee**

33. The Committee welcomed the application of Belarus for membership in the Committee (A/AC.105/2013/CRP.4) and decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, in 2013, that Belarus should become a member of the Committee.

34. The Committee welcomed the application of Ghana for membership in the Committee (A/AC.105/2013/CRP.3) and decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, in 2013, that Ghana should become a member of the Committee.

35. The Committee encouraged States that had applied, or were considering to apply, for membership in the Committee, as well as member States of the Committee, if they had not done so, to consider the possibility of acceding to the five United Nations treaties on outer space or at least some of them.

## **3. Observer status**

36. The Committee took note of the application of ISNET for permanent observer status with the Committee. The application and the relevant correspondence were before the Committee in conference room paper A/AC.105/2013/CRP.5.

37. The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, grant to ISNET the status of permanent observer with the Committee.

38. The Committee requested the Secretariat to present to it, on an annual basis, information on the consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of

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<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20), annex I; see also Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.*

non-governmental organizations having permanent observer status with the Committee.

#### **4. Organizational matters**

39. The Committee recalled its agreement made at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011, on certain methods to enhance the organization of work of its sessions and the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee,<sup>3</sup> and noted with satisfaction that those measures were already being applied successfully in the sessions of the Subcommittees and the Committee. In that regard, the Committee stressed the need for maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items in order to optimize the balance between the consideration of agenda items in plenary meetings and work conducted in working groups.

40. The Committee had before it a proposal by Greece on matters relating to the membership of the Committee, the composition of the bureaux and the duration of sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees, as contained in conference room paper A/AC.105/2013/CRP.22.

41. Some delegations expressed the view that the organization and methods of work of the Committee and its Subcommittees were a key element in strengthening the functioning and role of these bodies and invited delegations to engage constructively in consultations on proposals to make the work of these bodies more efficient and result oriented.

42. The view was expressed that member States should pay attention to the timely submission of documents to the Secretariat, in order to ensure their translation into the six official languages of the United Nations in time for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

43. The view was expressed that all conference room papers should, if possible, be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations.

44. The view was expressed that in the scheduling of the meetings, precedence should be given to substantive discussions on agenda items in plenary and in working groups, as well as other important matters, instead of technical presentations, in order to make the most efficient use of the interpretation services, and that an assessment should be made regarding the contribution of technical presentations to the work done in the Committee.

#### **5. Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Committee**

45. The Committee recommended that the following items be considered at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014:

1. Election of officers.
2. General exchange of views.
3. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.
4. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its fifty-first session.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/66/20)*, para. 298.

5. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its fifty-third session.
6. Space and sustainable development.
7. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
8. Space and water.
9. Space and climate change.
10. Use of space technology in the United Nations system.
11. Future role of the Committee.
12. Other matters.

## **K. Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies**

46. The Committee agreed on the following tentative timetable for its session and those of its Subcommittees in 2014:

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee	10-21 February 2014	Vienna
Legal Subcommittee	24 March-4 April 2014	Vienna
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	11-20 June 2014	Vienna