



General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
20 June 2013

Original: English

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Fifty-sixth session

Vienna, 12-21 June 2013

Agenda item 7

Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its fifty-second session

New agenda item on general exchange of information on non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space

Proposal submitted by Japan and supported by Austria, Canada, France, Nigeria and the United States of America

1. A number of non-legally binding instruments such as declarations, principles, resolutions, guidelines and frameworks related to outer space activities and to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes have been developed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees and have been adopted or recognized by the General Assembly in various resolutions. Those instruments support the existing United Nations treaties on outer space. With the development of space technology and the increase in and diversification of space actors, there is a pressing need to consider safe and sustainable use of outer space. To address contemporary challenges in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of the non-legally binding United Nations instruments and the practices related thereto. Hence, Japan has proposed a new agenda item on general exchange of information on non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space and the practices related thereto.

Objective and scope

2. The objectives of the proposed agenda item are to facilitate exchange of views on the topic and to share information on specific measures taken by member States and international organizations in relation to non-legally binding United Nations instruments, such as declarations, principles, resolutions, guidelines and frameworks, as identified in paragraph 1 above, that contribute to the exploration



and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. Under the item, the undertaking of a detailed study, with a view to seeking a common understanding on how to promote the instruments in order to address contemporary challenges in the exploration and use of outer space, could be discussed, if necessary.

3. While the scope of the proposed agenda item would focus on the 11 non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space,¹ other pertinent General Assembly resolutions related to the agenda of the Committee, as well as new non-legally binding United Nations instruments, could be discussed during the exchange of views.

Method of work

4. Firstly, it is proposed that member States should be encouraged to exchange their views and experiences in relation to the objectives and scope of the proposed agenda item, which are identified in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

5. Following such exchange of views, the Legal Subcommittee would discuss further modalities for seeking a common understanding on how to promote the non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space in order to address contemporary challenges. The Legal Subcommittee would consider the feasibility of establishing a Working Group for further elaboration of the activity under the agenda item.

¹ The 11 non-legally binding United Nations instruments on outer space are contained in *United Nations Treaties and Principles on Outer Space, related General Assembly resolutions and other documents* (ST/SPACE/61) and are as follows:

- (a) Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 1962 (XVIII));
- (b) Principles Governing the Use by States of Artificial Earth Satellites for International Direct Television Broadcasting (General Assembly resolution 37/92, annex);
- (c) Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 41/65, annex);
- (d) Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 47/68);
- (e) 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 (General Assembly resolution 51/122, annex);
- (f) General Assembly resolution 1721 A and B (XVI) on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space;
- (g) General Assembly resolution 55/122 on international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, in paragraph 4 of which the Assembly noted with satisfaction the agreement reached by the Legal Subcommittee on the question of the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit and the subsequent endorsement of that agreement by the Committee;
- (h) General Assembly resolution 59/115 on application of the concept of the “launching State”;
- (i) General Assembly resolution 62/101 on recommendations on enhancing the practice of States and international intergovernmental organizations in registering space objects;
- (j) Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/62/20)*, annex);
- (k) Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space (A/AC.105/934).