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Capacity-building in space law

Report on the United Nations Expert Meeting on Promoting Education in Space Law

(Vienna, 3-4 December 2007)

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Background and objectives.....	1-4	2
II. Programme.....	5	2
III. Attendance.....	6-7	2
IV. Recommendations and conclusions.....	8-11	3

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I. Background and objectives

1. Capacity-building, training and education in space law are of paramount importance to national, regional and international efforts to further develop space activities, in particular with regard to promoting broader understanding and acceptance of the international legal framework that governs the conduct of space activities. The need to build indigenous capacity in space law and policy was recognized by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and emphasized in the strategy of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to further implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

2. One of the pillars that support the development of legal and policy frameworks at the national level is the availability of professionals able to provide services in that field. Promoting education in space law is therefore included in the programme to build capacity in space law of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and is considered at the annual United Nations workshops on space law.

3. As a result of the conclusions reached by those workshops and the recommendations related to education in space law of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Subcommittee, the Office for Outer Space Affairs organized the holding of the first United Nations Expert Meeting on Promoting Education in Space Law, in Vienna, on 3 and 4 December 2007.

4. The main goal of the Meeting was to begin work on developing a curriculum for a basic course on space law that could be integrated into the programmes of the regional centres on space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations. The Meeting brought together educators and the heads of the regional centres.

II. Programme

5. During the course of the Meeting, participants were given a brief overview of the work and education programmes of the centres and discussed the conditions under which the centres operated, as well as the challenges facing them, with a view to ensuring that the course to be developed could be easily integrated into their existing education programmes. The participants also considered the structure and syllabus of the course and discussed ways of ensuring the continuation of the work on its development following the conclusion of the meeting.

III. Attendance

6. The following participants represented the regional centres: Abderrahmane Touzani, Director of the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education—in French Language; Oluwagbemiga Olawale Jegede, Director of the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education—in English Language; Tania Maria Sausen, Director of the Brazil Campus of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, affiliated to the United Nations; and Sergio Camacho, incoming

Secretary-General for the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean. Participants of the Meeting also had before them presentations prepared by George Joseph, Director of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, and by José Marques da Costa, the outgoing Secretary-General of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean.

7. The Meeting was attended by the following educators: Maureen Williams (University of Buenos Aires; International Law Association), José Monserrat Filho (Associação Brasileira de Direito Aeronáutico), Ram Jakhu (Institute of Air and Space Law, McGill University), Vladimír Kopal (University of Pilsen), Armel Kerrest (Institut de droit des espaces internationaux et des télécommunications, Université de Bretagne occidentale), Stephan Hobe (Institute of Air and Space Law, University of Cologne), Sergio Marchisio (Sapienza University of Rome; European Centre for Space Law), Frans von der Dunk (Institute of Air and Space Law, University of Leiden), Justine White (University of Pretoria), Nataliya Malysheva (International Centre for Space Law) and Joanne Gabrynowicz (National Remote Sensing and Space Law Centre, University of Mississippi).

IV. Recommendations and conclusions

8. The Meeting agreed that the curriculum of the basic course on space law would consist of two complementary modules. The first module, to be offered to all students, would address the basic concepts of international law and provide an introduction to the legal regime governing the conduct of space activities. The second module would be orientated to providing information on the international law and regulations applicable to the specific applications currently covered under the existing education programme of the centres, namely remote sensing and geographic information systems, satellite meteorology and global climate, satellite communications and space and atmospheric sciences.

9. The Meeting concluded its first reading of the draft syllabi of each of the modules and began to compile a list of reference resources.

10. The Meeting agreed to establish smaller working teams to further develop the syllabus of each of the modules and to complete the list of reference resources.

11. The Meeting agreed that the participants would continue their work by electronic means and by meeting in the margins of other activities during the course of 2008, with a view to concluding the second reading of the syllabi by the beginning of 2009.
