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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 19 April 1967, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. WALDHEIM

(Austria)

1. Statement by the Chairman
2. Organization of work (continued)

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STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Before proceeding to our agenda item for today, I wish to welcome the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, Ambassador Cole, who is participating in the work of our Committee for the first time. His presence among us offers testimony of the interest of the non-space Powers in the work of this Committee. We all look forward to close co-operation with Ambassador Cole.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

Mr. ARORA (India): At the last meeting the Committee had the benefit of listening to the Chairman's lucid presentation of the matters before it. It also had the opportunity of listening to the statements made by a number of delegations setting forth their points of view on some of the issues which require our decision. We trust that the Committee will be able to reach satisfactory conclusions on all these matters in a spirit of accommodation, which has all along been a distinct characteristic of this Committee.

(Mr. Arora, India)

At its forty-sixth meeting on 13 February, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the United Nations Conference on Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space be postponed to some time between April and September 1968. India, along with other developing countries, attaches great importance to this Conference, and it therefore shares your hope, Mr. Chairman, that the date of the Conference will be settled by a definite decision at the fifth special session of the General Assembly, so that the Panel of Experts will have adequate time for the preparation of the Conference. Since a period of about twelve to fourteen months will be required for its preparation, and also keeping in view the scientific conferences which are scheduled for next summer, and the convenience of the host country, it would appear that the Conference will have to be planned for August 1968.

The present task of the Committee is to take a decision on the organization of the work of the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. The General Assembly has, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 2222 (XXI), laid down the tasks to be undertaken by the Legal Sub-Committee. The two agreements regarding liability for damages and assistance to astronauts have been under consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee for over four years, which has helped in the clarification of some of the issues involved therein. Questions relative to the definition of outer space and its utilization have now been placed on the agenda at the initiative of the French delegation.

The Indian delegation considers that the Legal Sub-Committee should continue its work on the agreement regarding liability for damages as a matter of priority, and would, therefore, urge the Legal Sub-Committee to take it up as the first item for consideration by it. In this connexion, the representative of France, in his detailed and eloquent statement on Monday, has proposed certain priorities for the work of this Sub-Committee. We are in general agreement with the priorities suggested.

The General Assembly has endorsed the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the establishment of a working group to consider the need, feasibility and implementation of a navigation services satellite system. A number of delegations have already stressed the need for the setting up of a working group at an early date. India would wish to make its contribution to the work of the proposed group.

(Mr. Arora, India)

It has been suggested in paragraph 13 of resolution 2223 (XXI) that the Committee examine means to increase its usefulness as a centre of information for Member States. The Indian delegation believes that this idea merits consideration by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

The Thumba Equatorial Rocket launching station has continued to make satisfactory progress and, now, the Government of India is proposing further development of the facilities at the site which will better serve the needs of research and training, using sounding rockets. India will be happy to make these facilities available to other States as before.

The representative of Argentina requested, in his statement on Monday, United Nations sponsorship of an experimental centre for the launching of self-propelled projectiles. The Indian delegation notes the interest of the Government of Argentina in throwing open its site as an international rocket-launching facility and hopes that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will consider this request in terms of its relevance to scientific experiments and international use.

Both the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee have a heavy agenda before them. It is therefore desirable that they should meet at an early date to continue the work assigned to them. The Indian delegation is confident that it would be possible for the members of the Committee to agree on a suitable date and place for their meetings. The Indian delegation, however, has no particular viewpoint in regard to the date and venue of these meetings and would go along with the consensus arrived at among the members of the Committee.

Mr. DENORME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): During its twenty-first session, the General Assembly adopted two important resolutions prescribing the work to be undertaken or continued by this Committee, on the progress of which it is expected to report to the General Assembly at its next regular session.

The Belgian delegation is very happy to note that the treaty on the exploration and utilization of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, was prepared and concluded last year, and that from the

(Mr. Denorme, Belgium)

very start it obtained the signatures of almost eighty States, including Belgium. The text includes many general principles that should be the starting point for a set of special agreements comprising precise legal provisions. In the First Committee, Mr. Schuurmans, the representative of Belgium, stressed

"... the necessity of drafting separate agreements as soon as possible which would supplement the provisions of the general treaty."
(A/C.1/PV.1493, page 66)

It was therefore with much interest that we heard the very searching analysis presented by Mr. Seydoux, the representative of France, at the last meeting of this Committee. The Belgian delegation subscribes fully to the views which he has expressed, according to which it is appropriate to undertake, without further delay, the preparation of the further chapters of space law, of which the treaty is only the first chapter.

Belgium attaches particular importance to the question of liability for damages resulting from the launching of space vehicles. We would welcome a resumption of the study of this problem by the Legal Sub-Committee as soon as possible, and we wish to offer our constructive and active co-operation in the search for a solution to the problems that are still controversial. We note that many speakers -- among whom I will cite the representative of Lebanon, and the representative of India who has just spoken -- have emphasized that the question of an agreement on liability for damages caused by the launching of objects in space should be studied urgently and given the priority on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee assigned to it in General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI).

The Belgian delegation shares the view that the question of the use and the exploration of outer space deserves a very thorough study on the part of both Sub-Committees. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will also have a very heavy agenda.

(Mr. Denorme, Belgium)

Therefore we welcome the fact that both Sub-Committees will be meeting this year and that a working group is about to be set up to study the necessity, the feasibility and the means of establishing a network of navigation satellites. The date and place of the meetings of the Sub-Committees is now the subject of consultations. Even though those consultations have not yet produced an agreement on all points, in the view of our delegation these questions should not constitute insurmountable obstacles. Belgium will follow with great interest the work of those various organs, and we hope that their work will be completely successful.

During the course of this debate, several speakers have referred to the question of the United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Exploration and Uses of Outer Space. The Belgian delegation shares the anxiety that you expressed in your initial statement, Mr. Chairman, that this matter should be settled by a firm decision of the General Assembly at its fifth special session.

Mr. de SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to convey to the delegations of the United States, the Soviet Union and France the congratulations of the Brazilian Government on the latest achievements of those countries in space exploration.

My delegation was particularly gratified at the debate which took place during our last meeting. In this connexion, I should like to extend to the representative of France, Mr. Seydoux, my congratulations on the remarkable statement he made on the conduct of our business. My delegation is in full agreement with most of the ideas he suggested and accepts the agenda he has proposed for the two Sub-Committees.

During our last meeting the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Ruda, asked the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to examine at its forthcoming session the request of the Argentine Government for United Nations sponsorship for the Chemical Base. On behalf of my delegation, I should like to give my warm support to that suggestion and to congratulate the Government of Argentina on the completion of that base.

(Mr. de Souza e Silva, Brazil)

For the record I should like to recall the statement made by the Brazilian representative at the thirty-first meeting of our Committee, held on 3 November 1964, regarding the recommendation of the scientific group which visited the rocket launching site at Thumba that the Sub-Committee approve the granting of United Nations sponsorship for the sounding rocket launching facility set up by the Indian Government at Thumba. The Brazilian representative stated at that time that my Government viewed the question with special interest, and he then read the text of a memorandum which was circulated at the request of the permanent representative of Brazil to the United Nations. The memorandum reads:

"In connexion with General Assembly resolution 1802 (XVII) concerning the creation and use of sounding rocket launching facilities on the geomagnetic equator under United Nations sponsorship, the Brazilian Government wishes to inform the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that it is establishing sounding rocket launching facilities near Natal, in the northeast of Brazil. As the geomagnetic equator passes through that area of Brazilian territory, the findings of the sounding rocket launching facilities set up at Natal could be of the utmost interest to all Member States engaged in space research. The Brazilian Government, therefore, wishes to indicate its intention -- as soon as all the necessary arrangements have been completed -- to request United Nations sponsorship for those facilities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1802 (XVII). The Brazilian Government is convinced that in so doing, it will contribute to furthering international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space."

That memorandum was circulated as document A/AC.105/23 on 3 November 1964.

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform this Committee that the construction of the sounding rocket launching facilities at Natal is proceeding at considerable speed and will be concluded in the near future. Furthermore, the Brazilian Government still has the intention of requesting United Nations sponsorship for those facilities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1802 (XVII). The Brazilian Government in so doing pledges itself to abide by the principles set forth in the pertinent United Nations resolution on the uses of such facilities.

Mr. CSATORDAY (Hungary): At the twenty-first session of the General Assembly last year, we achieved considerable success in adopting three important resolutions concerning space matters. Those resolutions are important because they point up all those aspects on which we are already in agreement. That is especially true in connexion with resolution 2222 (XXI), the "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies".

While expressing our satisfaction that so many States have already signed the Treaty, we should be mindful of the fact that several suggestions and proposals were made during the debate in the Legal Sub-Committee last year which have not been reflected in the text of the Treaty. As regards that aspect, the Treaty was only the beginning of the road; we have to continue that work. Some specific issues call for further elaboration, as was clearly shown in the programme of work of our Committee which was prepared for us by our Chairman regarding the problems of the Legal Sub-Committee and those of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. I should like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that document. Indeed, it was useful at the very outset of this session to have so comprehensive a document.

Together with resolution 2222 (XXI), the other two General Assembly resolutions -- 2221 (XXI) and 2223 (XXI) -- give us guidance as to the framework for our deliberations in the main Committee and in the two respective Sub-Committees. The issues involved are very complex, as the representative of France has so eloquently demonstrated in our Committee. A comprehensive review of the legal and scientific problems connected with our further deliberations should be taken up by those Committees.

In our view, there are quite a few questions which are pressingly important; for instance, the question of liability for damages caused by the launching of objects into outer space and the question of assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles should be dealt with as soon as possible. The Hungarian delegation, recognizing the importance of that question, has submitted a draft in the Legal Sub-Committee on liability and assistance, and it has tried its best to make a contribution to elaborating the necessary formulas which could be incorporated in the Treaty. I wish to assure the Committee that it is our goal in the Legal Sub-Committee to evolve a comprehensive and generally acceptable formula in order to make the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies more effective.

(Mr. Csatorday, Hungary)

Naturally, the definition of outer space, the question of the utilization of outer space, and other equally important issues just mentioned and referred to by other representatives should be discussed with seriousness and with the necessary urgency and priority. However, the Hungarian delegation strongly believes that the main Committee should not go so far as to determine in advance and in detail the agenda of the Sub-Committees. The Hungarian delegation agrees with the view expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union in connexion with such a question of principle: "... the Legal Sub-Committee itself is quite competent to resolve those questions..." of priority of items. (47th meeting, p. 52).

The Hungarian delegation also welcomes the proposal made in connexion with the establishment of a working group dealing with the navigation satellite system. In fact, the Hungarian delegation several years ago made such a proposal, though our country is not directly connected with such problems. We recognize, however, the general importance and necessity of such proposals and programmes.

In connexion with the schedules of the forthcoming meetings of the two Sub-Committees, the Hungarian delegation agrees that the Legal Sub-Committee should meet before the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee meets, and that its session should last for at least four weeks. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should meet for approximately two weeks after the Legal Sub-Committee closes its session. Of course, in this suggestion the Hungarian delegation is trying to follow a pattern which has proved suitable during the past year. Nevertheless, we regard all such recommendations as requiring flexibility. In case there is need for the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to meet simultaneously with the Legal Sub-Committee, we think both should be convened. It was suggested at the last meeting that in some questions which are to be discussed in the Legal Sub-Committee the expert opinion of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would be necessary. For instance, the French Ambassador, Mr. Seydoux, proposed that in the search for a definition of outer space, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should first be asked. As he explained, their expert opinion would be absolutely necessary, and we think that this is a valuable suggestion. It might be that the Legal Sub-Committee would have to ask to have several questions defined by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee before a decision was taken.

(Mr. Csatorday, Hungary)

In our opinion, therefore, in order to achieve a much higher degree of efficiency, it would be very purposeful and desirable to have an overlap in the meetings of the two Sub-Committees for at least one week.

Such practical requirements would, of course, make it necessary for the two Sub-Committees to meet at the same place, or at least on the same continent. It would be extremely difficult for them to keep in touch with each other across the ocean. In both Sub-Committees we should rely on the work of our experts, and we should show our respect for them by trying to save their valuable time. In the view of the Hungarian delegation, the greatest amount of time -- and not only time but costs as well -- could be saved if the two Sub-Committees were to hold their meetings near the capitals of the majority of the members of the Sub-Committees, that is in Europe. Practice has clearly shown that both of the Sub-Committees were able to do excellent work in Geneva last year. Therefore the Hungarian delegation supports the suggestion that both Sub-Committees meet in 1967 also in Europe. We base our view on the opinion of a great number of delegations of countries that are interested in participating in those meetings.

Mr. SINCLAIR (United Kingdom): The Committee has been meeting over these past two days to consider its programme of work for the year. In this connexion we must all express our indebtedness to you, Mr. Chairman, for your lucid introduction of the issues which have to be clarified and decided by the Committee at **this** particular session.

I should like to refer first of all to the proposed programme of work for the Legal Sub-Committee. The general framework, the general scheme of work, for the Legal Sub-Committee is, of course, set out in operative paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI). In this connexion, the United Kingdom delegation believes that the Legal Sub-Committee should intensify its work on the draft convention on liability for damage caused by space objects. Already there has been considerable discussion within the Legal Sub-Committee on this particular draft convention, but a number of important issues require further clarification before the draft convention can be completed. We believe it is important that the Legal Sub-Committee should attempt, as a matter of priority, to obtain these clarifications and to present a draft convention on liability for damage caused by space objects.

(Mr. Sinclair, United Kingdom)

It is also the hope of the United Kingdom delegation that it will be possible for the Legal Sub-Committee to complete its work on the draft convention on assistance to and return of astronauts. Already, considerable progress has been made on that draft convention, and it would be our hope that the work could soon be completed.

These two draft conventions which have already been under consideration within the framework of the Legal Sub-Committee constitute attempts to formulate a more detailed regulation of certain aspects of space exploration and space activities.

The Treaty on principles governing the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, which was unanimously approved by the General Assembly at its twenty-first session, was an important achievement bearing witness to the fruitful work done in the past year by the Legal Sub-Committee. But it is no secret that if we are to have a comprehensive legal régime for outer space, certain of the principles and provisions embodied in this Treaty have to be further elaborated and refined. The Committee must therefore express its indebtedness to the representative of France for his profound, searching and forward-looking survey of the problems which may have to be tackled in this sphere. My Government will certainly wish to give careful and serious attention to the views expressed by the representative of France, views which bear the stamp of considered reflection.

(Mr. Sinclair, United Kingdom)

The United Kingdom delegation supports the suggestion that both the Legal Sub-Committee and the Technical and Scientific Sub-Committee should meet during the course of this year. There are clearly problems as to the timing and venue of the meetings of the two Sub-Committees, problems which my delegation would suggest should be the subject of further informal consultations which you, Mr. Chairman, would no doubt originate and complete. The problems involve, naturally, the provision of adequate facilities at whatever venue may be chosen for the meetings of the Sub-Committees. They also involve problems of representation for delegations, particularly bearing in mind the already crowded calendar of United Nations meetings during the course of this summer. It would certainly be our hope that we could reach agreement on the dates and venue of the meetings of the two Sub-Committees and it would be our hope that further consultations would reveal what are the possibilities.

I would not wish to conclude without making reference to the proposed working group on navigation satellites. My delegation has already indicated to you, Mr. Chairman, its interest in this matter and its wish to be represented on the proposed working group when it is eventually established.

Mr. HILMY II (United Arab Republic): After hearing the representative of India this afternoon emphasizing the interest of his delegation that a date should be promptly agreed upon in regard to the convening of the Outer Space Conference, my delegation would like to state that we also share the interest of the Indian delegation in that respect.

We expressed last February, when the Committee agreed to postpone the Conference for one year, that as a developing country ourselves we attach great importance to the outcome of that Conference. We also stressed our anxiety that no more time should be lost on deciding the new date. We are fully aware that the fixing of the date has to be endorsed by the General Assembly which is to meet next Friday. Naturally we know that the Panel of Experts should have adequate time for the preparation of the Conference.

Therefore, my delegation would like to second the suggestion of the Indian delegation.

The CHAIRMAN: In our meetings on Monday and today we heard a number of interesting statements with regard to the future work of this Committee and its Sub-Committees. I should, in particular, like to mention the statement of Ambassador Seydoux which I am convinced represents a most remarkable contribution to our endeavour to provide for law and order in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. I should like with your permission to inform you now of the results of the consultations which I had with a number of delegations and with the Secretariat since our last meeting on Monday.

There seems to be agreement that the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee should take place in Geneva and that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should be convened in New York. As to the exact date of those meetings the suggestion was made that the Legal Sub-Committee should start not later than the end of May of this year for a period of about three weeks. Other delegations, however, seem to have serious difficulties in starting before 5 June. In fixing a date for the Legal Sub-Committee we shall also have to take into account the point of view of the Secretariat because it appears extremely difficult to provide conference facilities in Geneva during the periods which I have just mentioned. The same would be true for New York where the Legal Sub-Committee could not be serviced before 12 June.

In this connexion I should like to thank Under-Secretary Nosek and his staff for their efforts to meet the wishes of the delegations as much as possible. May I inform the Committee that Mr. Nosek had a telephone conversation yesterday with Geneva in order to find out what period would be available for the meeting of the Legal Sub-Committee. The result was, as I have indicated, not satisfactory at all because Mr. Nosek was informed that for the time being at least no facilities were available prior to 24 July. That, of course, would be too late because, as you know, we have agreed that the meeting of the Legal Sub-Committee should not overlap with the meeting of the Committee on Friendly Relations. In those circumstances I should like to suggest that the Chairman continue his consultations with the members of this Committee and in due course announce the exact date of the session of the Legal Sub-Committee.

(The Chairman)

With regard to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, a number of delegations have indicated that the best time would be the first two weeks in September. There were, of course, other suggestions, too, to have it earlier perhaps prior to the meeting of COSPAR in London. The Secretariat has informed me that there would be no technical difficulties if the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee were to meet in New York towards the end of August for a period of two weeks; in other words, to start during the last days of August, perhaps 28 August or 29 August, and to continue for two weeks until 8 September or 11 September. That would enable us to arrange for a meeting of our main Committee in the week before the beginning of the twenty-second session of the General Assembly. That, of course, is very important because we should get the reports of the two Sub-Committees in time so that the main Committee could then deal with them and make the necessary recommendations to the General Assembly.

With regard to the agenda of the two Sub-Committees, there seems to be agreement that the Sub-Committees should deal with the questions enumerated in document A/AC.105/CRP.1(IX), referred to as a Note by the Chairman, it being understood that the Sub-Committees will themselves decide on the organization of their work.

With regard to the working group on navigation which this Committee has to set up in accordance with its mandate, there seems to be general agreement that the group should meet as soon as possible and that it should be open to all interested members of this Committee.

(The Chairman)

So far, the following countries have informed me of their desire to participate in the working group: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, India, Italy, Japan, Romania, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. I would suggest therefore, that the Committee, after the conclusion of its debate, should decide to set up the working group and that the members interested inform the Secretariat as soon as possible of the names of their experts -- the names that I have mentioned were only those which I have been given in the meantime, but there is no deadline. All those countries wishing to participate in the work of the working group are asked kindly to inform the Secretariat accordingly.

The exact date of the meeting, which should take place before the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee meets, could be arranged in consultation with those members who have indicated their interest in participating.

In this connexion I should like to recall the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that the Working Group on Navigation should be composed of interested members of the Committee and representatives invited from the specialized agencies, such as ICAO, IMCO and ITU. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee further recommended that it should be composed, as far as possible, of specialists and should be directed to consider in sequence and make recommendations to the Committee regarding the need, feasibility and implementation of a navigation services satellite system, including such aspects as implementation of costs, organization, legal questions, etc.

Those are the suggestions which I have to make in connexion with the organization of the work of this Committee and its Sub-Committees. May I ask whether those proposals and suggestions are acceptable to the Committee? If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with the proposed procedure.

Mr. DELEAU (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation has listened with great attention to your statements, Mr. Chairman, concerning the programme of work of the Sub-Committees. I am happy to be able to tell you that, once more, we fully agree with you and that we appreciate the efficiency with which you have examined the proposals which have been presented.

Perhaps it would not be superfluous at this stage to recall the position of my delegation concerning the future work of the Sub-Committee. We explained this position at the last meeting. We spoke of the importance which we attached to a thorough study of the questions mentioned in paragraph 4 (b) of resolution 2222 (XXI). We pointed out that the Legal Sub-Committee should, in our opinion, devote a good part of its work -- at least a quarter of its meetings -- to the examination of those questions, that is to say, the questions of the definition of outer space and of the regulations of the utilization of outer space. Since our intervention other views have been expressed on the allocation of the items to the two Sub-Committees. We listened with interest to those views and we hope that a compromise will permit a study of these new questions to be undertaken in better circumstances and in the spirit of your note of 7 April 1967.

(A/AC.105/CRP.1(IX). With regard to the utilization of outer space, the debate which, it is proposed, the Legal Sub-Committee will hold would be a general debate designed to put the question as a whole and quite clearly, without trying at this stage to seek formal conclusions, at least not before the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee -- which is essentially on this point -- has made such conclusions possible.

With regard to the definition of outer space, my delegation is happy that a thorough debate can be held, first of all, in the Legal Sub-Committee, followed by a debate in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, which will have something to say in the matter. Working relations which, we hope, will be fruitful, can thus be reestablished between the two Sub-Committees.

Before concluding, I should like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the delegations which have expressed appreciation for the effort which we made in trying to tabulate the tasks which will confront us in the forthcoming sessions of the Sub-Committee and of the Committee on Outer Space.

Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America): I should like to associate myself in large measure with the comments just made by the representative of France. I do believe that, based on the discussion in this Committee and the consultations which we have had, there is a relatively large measure of agreement on the programme of work for this Committee and its two Sub-Committees and I would have little to add to your statement of the other day.

I should like, however, to endorse in particular the comment with regard to the programme of work outlined in document A/AC.105/CRP.1(IX), which has just been alluded to, and, in particular, the reference to the study which is to be given to paragraph 4 (b) of resolution 2222 (XXI). That paragraph, as representatives will recall, requested this Committee to "begin at the same time the study of questions relative to the definition of outer space and the utilization of outer space and celestial bodies, including the various implications of space communications". In a way, I think that those two topics, as I suggested the other day are a little like oranges and apples, as we would say, but I think that a useful distinction can be made between the two.

We have already indicated that we think it is quite proper for the Legal Sub-Committee to treat the matter of the definition of outer space as a matter falling, in the first instance, within its province. However, the second half of paragraph 4 (b), which relates to the utilization of outer space, as our statement indicated is one which at the outset would require a great deal of technical clarification and, therefore, would be, in our judgement, a proper subject for a thorough investigation by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, although we would certainly expect and recognize that in any prior meeting of the Legal Sub-Committee there might be views on this matter expressed by one delegation or another which would provide useful guidance to the members of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

(Mr. Buffum, United States)

Secondly -- and this is admittedly a little apart from the programme of work that we have been talking about -- the question has been raised again here today of the date of the conference on the peaceful uses of outer space. Some members may recall that the United States delegation called attention in its statement the day before yesterday to the importance that we attached to establishing a date for such a conference so that adequate plans could be made in advance. We are very happy that specific suggestions have been made here today and we have noted in particular the suggestion that August 1968 would be an appropriate time for such a meeting. I am authorized to say to the Committee that as far as the United States is concerned that date would be agreeable. If that is the wish of the membership of this Committee and the United Nations, we would merely again express the hope that an agreement on a precise date can be arrived at as soon as possible.

Mr. KUTAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation, in its statement on Monday, 17 April, has already stated that it supports the proposal to include in the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee the questions referred to in General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI). We believe that the Legal Sub-Committee must consider those questions. It will of course determine for itself the order for discussion and, if necessary, it will also put questions to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee for consultative opinions. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will have very highly specialized experts and will be able, if necessary, to make very important and interesting technical comments on the questions put to it by the Legal Sub-Committee at such time as the substance of those technical and scientific questions becomes clear. However, before any consideration of these matters by the Legal Sub-Committee, we see no reason why the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should deal with them.

Many representatives have spoken here of the order in which the various items should be taken up. I wanted to stress once again that the order of consideration of the various items by the Legal Sub-Committee is something that the Legal Sub-Committee itself should decide. In that connexion the Soviet

(Mr. Kutakov, USSR)

delegation believes, for example, that the matter of assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles should be one of the first to be discussed.

Mr. FIORIO (Italy): I agree with what several representatives have stated in the course of this discussion to the effect that the two Sub-Committees should decide for themselves what their agendas will be. However, for the sake of clarification at this time, I would point out that the matters of definition of space and utilization of space have been deemed appropriate for handling by both Sub-Committees. One of the two matters has prevalent legal significance -- that is, the matter of definition of outer space -- although it has technical implications, while the matter of the utilization of outer space has at this time primarily technical significance but will have in the future legal implications. Therefore I wonder -- without negating the privilege of either Sub-Committee to handle both matters -- whether it would not be wise to consider a kind of priority for handling them. In other words, the Legal Sub-Committee might handle the matter of the definition of space first and then pass it on to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee for technical guidance, while the matter of the utilization of outer space would be given first to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and passed on to the Legal Sub-Committee later on when it has been fully clarified, so as not to confuse the members of the Legal Sub-Committee on matters not yet defined.

Furthermore, I should like at this time to recall a proposal which the Italian delegation has made several times, with regard to the need to help the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees. I wonder whether this is the place and the time to repeat the suggestion that on the agenda of each Sub-Committee there be an item regarding the possibility of naming an official to the Bureau in addition to the Chairman in order to help him.

There is a third idea, which is related not to the two Sub-Committees but to the Working Group on Navigation. In confirming that Italy is interested in participating in this work, which is work for specialists of a very high calibre, we suggest that the venue for the meetings of the Working Group could be

(Mr. Fiorio, Italy)

one of the places where some of the users are assembled, and, as ICAO and IMCO are users, it might be either Montreal or London. I make that suggestion in view of the consultations that will be taking place on this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: The statements of the delegations of France, the United States, the Soviet Union and Italy will be placed on record. As far as the suggestions of the representative of Italy are concerned, I may perhaps suggest that we forward the record of this debate, containing the suggestions made by the representative of Italy, to the two Sub-Committees for further study and clarification of that important matter.

If I hear no objections, I shall assume that, with that understanding, the proposals of the Chair are acceptable to the Committee.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: In connexion with the subjects we have dealt with, the Secretary of the Committee wishes to make a statement, and I give him the floor.

Mr. ABDEL-GHANI (Secretary of the Committee): It is my duty, in accordance with the rules of procedure and the financial regulations, to make a statement regarding the financial implications before the Committee takes any decision with regard to its programme.

In the 1967 budget estimates, only pro memoria provision was made for the 1967 meetings of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees, since the Committee had taken no decision on its programme of meetings at the time the estimates were prepared. The decision to convene one or both of the Sub-Committees in Geneva, or away from Headquarters, will entail additional expenditure. A detailed estimate cannot be presented, of course, at this time, and this depends on the exact dates of the meetings; but I should mention for the information of the Committee that the cost of holding the meetings of the two Sub-Committees in Geneva in 1966 was \$68,000. Of that sum roughly \$50,000 was attributable to the meetings of the Legal Sub-Committee and \$18,000 to those of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

(The Secretary)

As I have indicated, the 1967 budget estimates contain only a pro memoria provision for the meetings of the Sub-Committees. It will therefore be necessary for the Secretary-General to seek the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to incur the necessary expenditure under the terms of General Assembly resolution 2243 (XXI) relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the financial year 1967.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments on the statement just made by the Committee Secretary? There are none. That concludes the ninth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to thank all representatives for their usual co-operation which helped us to fulfil our task in a relatively short time. My thanks also go to the Under-Secretary, Mr. Nesterenko; to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Abdel Ghani; and, on behalf of the Bureau of the Committee, to the interpreters and other staff members for their very valuable assistance.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.