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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 8 September 1972, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

- Expression of welcome to Mr. Cornelis De Jager, Chairman of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)
- Consideration of the reports of
 - (a) The Legal Sub-Committee (continued)
 - (b) The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, including the summary of the preparatory session of the Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites (continued)

This record is issued in final form pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee in September 1970 (see Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/8020, para. 10)).

EXPRESSION OF WELCOME TO MR. CORNELIS De JAGER, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPACE RESEARCH (COSPAR)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Before I call on the first speaker, I should like to welcome Mr. Cornelis De Jager, the new Chairman of COSPAR, who is here this morning and will attend our meetings for the next few days. I am very pleased to congratulate him on his election to the chairmanship of COSPAR. As the Committee knows, Mr. De Jager is a world-famous astronomer; he is professor of astronomy at the University of Amsterdam; and he has rendered outstanding service to the international community, particularly in the field of outer space. I should like to welcome him here and I hope that we will have the pleasure of hearing him make a statement during our session.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF

- (a) THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/101) (continued)
- (b) THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/102), INCLUDING THE SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATORY SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON REMOTE SENSING OF THE EARTH BY SATELLITES (continued)

Mr. DATCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, it is a special pleasure for my delegation to extend to you again our most cordial and friendly congratulations on your brilliant election to preside over this Committee. We should like to join with the other delegations which have expressed their confidence that thanks to your qualities and your enthusiasm our Committee, under your able direction, will meet with new success in its work, which was so greatly advanced under the guidance of your distinguished predecessors. We should like in particular to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, who, although very busy, was able to find time to come here at the outset of our work and give us encouragement in our task.

The subject-matter with which our Committee is dealing undoubtedly represents one of the most dynamic sectors for international co-operation, where the effects of accelerated and sometimes spectacular development in science and technology today are felt in ever more pressing fashion, by adding a new and important dimension to the role of the United Nations to promote peaceful co-operation among nations in the spirit of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter, to the benefit of all nations and to the advancement of their economic and social progress.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

Attempting to meet these requirements, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, through its two Sub-Committees, this year also engaged in fruitful activity both in respect of the development of space law and in respect of international co-operation in the question of the application of space technology.

The task of the codification of space law to which our Committee has been committed almost from the outset of its work -- which already has taken shape in three international agreements -- has been pursued consistently, which means that we now are in the course of taking a further step in that direction. I refer to the drafting of a treaty concerning the moon, the initiative for which was taken by the Soviet Union at the last session of the General Assembly. We supported that initiative, for we consider that such a treaty could be a harmonious supplement to the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

We would like to emphasize the remarkable work done by the Legal Sub-Committee during its session this year. It has succeeded in reaching agreement on a large majority of the provisions of the draft treaty concerning the moon. Such results were possible thanks to the spirit of co-operation and understanding which prevailed in the course of that session, as well as to the devotion and the competence with which Mr. Eugeniusz Wyzner of Poland guided the work of the Sub-Committee. He gave us a very complete report on its work the other day.

In our opinion, the articles of the draft treaty concerning the moon in respect to which agreement has not yet been reached do not present any insurmountable difficulties. Hence, one of the primary problems which is still awaiting solution is the question of the sphere of applicability of the future treaty dealing with the moon. Since different views have been expressed by various delegations on this question, we feel that a reasonable compromise would be the idea that the provisions of the treaty concerning the moon could be applied also to other celestial bodies to the extent that no special agreements had been concluded for those bodies. This compromise could be given concrete form, as the remaining delegations suggested at the session of the Legal Sub-Committee, by including a new article along these lines in the text of the treaty.

With respect to the question of the legal régime to govern the natural resources of the moon, my delegation considers that the treaty dealing with the moon should include, among its provisions, the principle that all States are entitled to benefit in equitable fashion from the results of the exploration and exploitation of the moon. Accordingly, we believe that the exploration and exploitation of the natural satellite of the earth should be carried out taking into account the present and future interests of all States, and above all the priority needs of the developing countries.

I turn now to the question of liability for damage caused on the moon, a question which is also not solved as yet. We consider that we could usefully refer to the relevant provisions of the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects adopted last year by the General Assembly. Perhaps the terminology used in that Convention could inspire us finally to find a generally acceptable solution for the treaty concerning the moon.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

In my delegation's view it follows that, while adhering to the recommendation addressed by the General Assembly to the Committee to examine as a matter of priority the question of the drafting of an international treaty on the moon, we should here continue the efforts that were made in the Legal Sub-Committee to seek to finalize the draft treaty. Pursuing our work in the same spirit of co-operation and goodwill which prevailed at the last session of the Legal Sub-Committee, our Committee would be in a position to submit the draft treaty to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session. My delegation is ready to make its full contribution to this work.

In the same spirit, we feel that the Legal Sub-Committee should continue, and with increased vigour, its activities concerning the progressive elaboration of space law. It is now seized of the question of an international treaty on the registration of objects launched into space. In this connexion we would like to express our appreciation of the remarkable preparatory work that has been done by France and Canada, which, in jointly submitting a text of a draft convention, have ensured a better understanding of the problems -- I refer to the problems involved in the registration of space vehicles -- and have provided a basis for a generally acceptable solution.

In our view, such a convention could prove very useful. Its drafting would seem to be a logical consequence of the adoption by the General Assembly in 1971 of the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, for the application of that Convention implies a precise identification of the origin of these objects. It would perhaps be advisable to ask the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to assist the Legal Sub-Committee in solving the technical problems to which such a convention on registration would give rise.

Another subject for the codification of space law which deserves our full attention is that of the definition of the concept of outer space. We are in favour of a reactivation of the efforts designed to formulate such a definition which is likely to ensure respect for national sovereignty over air space and the access of all States to outer space for scientific research and the use of that area for peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Datecu, Romania)

The growing volume of scientific knowledge and the developing progress in space technology open up vast prospects for the peaceful use of outer space for all mankind. This requires our Committee to engage in even further activity in order to increase international co-operation in this field. For there is no doubt that the pursuit of the exploration and use of space should be carried out to the benefit of all States and in the interest of the development of friendly relations and mutual understanding between them in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

An important place in the concerns of the Committee has been granted to the question of the utilization of satellites for the direct transmission of radio and television programmes. The Working Group specially created for this purpose had three useful sessions and reached certain conclusions concerning the vast possibilities for the application of direct broadcasting by satellites in the interest of all mankind, and the need to institute international co-operation in this field. Many new elements have developed since May 1970, when the last session of the Working Group was held, which would seem to justify the suggestion made by the Swedish delegation to reconvene this Working Group in 1973.

In this connexion we should like to bring out the importance of an examination of the complicated legal issues which are raised by the use of satellites for radio and television broadcasting, bearing in mind, above all, the possibility that they would be received in countries other than the transmitting country. This Committee should attempt to forge an adequate legal framework so that this outstanding scientific and technological achievement is used exclusively for the well being of man, for the promotion of the ideals of peace and relations of friendship and co-operation among all peoples, while ensuring strict respect for the sovereignty and independence of each State and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of others.

The need for better co-ordination at the international level in this sector is already being felt, and the General Assembly of the United Nations has been seized of a proposal by the Soviet Union concerning the

(Mr. Datecu, Romania)

preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of satellites for direct television broadcast. Similarly, the General Conference of UNESCO will examine at its forthcoming session a draft declaration on guiding principles on the use of satellite broadcasting for the free flow of information, the spread of education and greater cultural exchanges. Other organizations in the international arena also are engaged in activities in this field.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

We consider that this co-ordinating role can be exercised by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Another important action of the Committee was the decision to create a Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites, which held a preparatory session in May this year. In our opinion, that preparatory session was useful because it brought out the principal problems of remote sensing of the earth which should be studied and discussed. We would stress the need to ensure the widest possible dissemination at the international level of scientific and technical knowledge existing at the present time in this field and of the results of experiments under way regarding the possibility of remote sensing of the earth by satellites.

This new scientific achievement of the use of space also requires the creation as quickly as possible of an international legal framework to govern remote sensing activities. In this connexion, my delegation considers that we should proclaim the principle of the absolute requirement to request and obtain the prior consent of a State when such surveying is being carried out by another State on the territory of that State. This principle flows from a well-established concept governing contemporary international relations -- that of the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources -- a concept in the elaboration of which the United Nations played the primary role.

From what I have just said and, in a more complete way, from the reports that have been submitted to us by the two Sub-Committees, it is clear that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has had positive achievements in its activities and that there are still many tasks on our agenda, which we should attempt successfully to complete.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to reaffirm the importance which my country attaches to the development of international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space. Romania is participating with interest in the various undertakings of international co-operation in this field, on the bilateral as well as the multilateral level, in particular with the socialist countries, in certain programmes for the application of space technology.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

It is obvious that in view of the scope of the material and human resources that the exploration and use of outer space requires, for the vast majority of States access to space technology can become a reality only through extensive international co-operation. In this connexion a primary role falls to the United Nations and in particular to the body especially created for this purpose, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. It is true that our Committee and its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee have engaged in remarkable activities in this direction in the course of the years. At this session as well, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, under the competent leadership of Professor Carver of Australia, recommends to us an important programme on space applications for the year 1973 and the guiding principles of a programme for 1974, which my delegation fully supports.

Referring to these programmes, we cannot fail to note the substantial role that the United Nations expert on space applications, Professor Humberto Ricciardi of Argentina, has played in their drafting, as well as the tireless and constant efforts he has made.

In paying him a tribute for the valuable service he has rendered to the United Nations and in expressing our regret that he is about to leave the Organization, we should like to convey to him once again our deep esteem and extend our best wishes for his future activities.

However -- and we fully agree with the comments you made, Mr. Chairman, in your statement opening the current session -- we consider that our Committee can and should increase its role in the advancement of international co-operation with respect to the peaceful uses of outer space and that the work of the Committee itself should concern matters of substance and define the guidelines for the activity of the Organization in this field and not be confined merely to taking note of its subsidiary bodies. We also feel that the efforts of the Committee, and in particular those of its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, should be directed even further towards activities which would ensure to all States -- regardless of their size or their technical or economic potential -- access to the uses of space technology for their economic and social development and for the promotion of the well-being of their people. It goes without saying that, just as in the past, Romania will attempt to make its contribution to the achievement of this goal.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

With respect to the future programme of work of our Committee, we consider that the suggestion made by the Japanese delegation that the 1973 session of the Committee should be held in June rather than in September is wise and would create conditions which would enable Member States better to concentrate on the work of this Committee. If the Secretariat confirms that from a technical standpoint it is possible for our Committee to meet in June 1973, my delegation is prepared to accept this suggestion.

Before concluding, I should like sincerely to thank all the representatives who were good enough to say kind words about me on the occasion of my election to the vice-chairmanship of this Committee. I should like once again to assure the Committee of my sincere desire to make my modest contribution -- side by side with you, Mr. Chairman, and the distinguished Rapporteur of the Committee, Mr. Antonio de Sousa e Silva of Brazil -- to the success of our common undertaking.

Mr. CHRISTIANI (Austria): The Committee has had the opportunity in the past three days to listen to a large number of excellent statements covering many questions not only as regards the actual work on the agenda of the Committee but also touching upon concepts of the future role of our endeavours. Many things have been said with which my delegation finds itself in complete agreement. In a few instances, however, we have a different point of view and are therefore inclined to favour different approaches. I shall therefore confine my remarks to a few specific observations on the contents of the reports before us as well as on some statements made during the last three days.

As to the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, my delegation moves with great satisfaction that considerable progress was made with respect to the drafting of the moon treaty as well as the convention on registration. In fact, as far as the moon treaty is concerned, we have a complete text with only a few outstanding questions. In the view of my delegation, these well-known and so far unresolved issues are of a fundamental political nature and therefore require to be settled through a political decision and a readiness for accommodation and compromise rather than further complicated and detailed discussion and consideration of a legal nature. But that is exactly what our Committee is called upon to do. At least in the view of my delegation, the Outer Space Committee should be a policy-oriented body to discuss and solve issues of a fundamental nature -- questions which the Sub-Committees were not able to solve. We therefore cannot see any reason why we should not at least try here and now to overcome the remaining difficulties.

From several statements made yesterday I gathered a certain reluctance to adopt this kind of approach; rather it was preferred to have the draft sent back to the Legal Sub-Committee. Well, if that is the wish of the majority of delegations, my delegation would certainly not object to it. Nevertheless, we could use the remaining week of our session to settle at least one or two of the three or four outstanding issues. There are several well-known possibilities open to do that and I shall not make any specific proposals for the conduct of business. If delegations feel this goal could be better achieved through private, informal consultations among themselves rather than by establishing any sort of consulting machinery in the form of a working

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

group, this would certainly constitute an adequate way. However, in that case it seems to my delegation to be necessary that the Committee get a clear idea by the middle of the coming week at the latest of what is going on.

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

Now, what are the outstanding issues? The first is the question of the scope of the treaty. We had encouraging word yesterday from the representative of the United States that agreement on this question seemed to be within reach. My delegation would favour a compromise -- brought forward in the Legal Sub-Committee -- to the effect that provisions might be included in the treaty stating that the treaty should apply also to other celestial bodies until such time as provision is made in other treaties for specific celestial bodies.

As far as the very important question of the regulation of the natural resources is concerned, my delegation is to be found among those which favour an expressive statement of the "common heritage of mankind". This principle, vague and general in nature as it might be, is a very important political declaration, almost as important as the principle of non-use of force. Of course, it might very well be argued that it is too early in the stage of exploration and that consequently little is known of the technological possibilities and economic uses of the natural resources of the moon and other celestial bodies to provide for a legal régime for the resources. But this, in our view, does not conflict in any way with the declaration of a general principle. We all recall the declaration of principles concerning the sea-bed, where this principle was stated as a major policy declaration a few years ago but which did and does in no way hamper the concrete way of regulating the natural resources. The same philosophy applies to our subject. As long as we have stated and confirmed this concept, it does not seem necessary to regulate the natural resources of the moon and other celestial bodies here and now in the present convention. This might very well be the subject of an independent agreement, concluded at a time when more is known of the technological possibilities and economic uses.

As for the third open question, the notification of and reporting on moon missions, my delegation would naturally favour a solution which would ensure the widest possible knowledge of such missions to the benefit of a great number of countries; but we could, nevertheless, go along with the compromise proposal Canada has made in the Legal Sub-Committee to the effect that in

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

article IV, paragraph 3, only the word "mission" appeared, so that States concerned could exercise their own discretion in deciding when to provide information.

If I may add some general remarks about the value of such a moon treaty as a whole, I wish to refer to the statement by the representative of Brazil the other day. The representative expressed the opinion that the treaty in its present form adds very little, if anything, to existing norms of international law and has, therefore, very little, if any, value. I cannot quite agree with this opinion, for reasons I will try to outline briefly as follows.

The treaty, on several matters, represents, in our view, a significant advance over the earlier agreements. A substantial amount of agreement on new treaty provisions has been reached. I could cite many examples. Let me just mention a few of the salient features of the draft. Firstly, prohibition of the threat or use of force or any other hostile act or threat of hostile act is contained in article II, paragraph 2. Secondly, there is a provision to the effect that in all activities covered by the treaty due regard should be paid to the interests of present and future generations. Thirdly, provision is made for the possibility of international co-operation in pursuance of the treaty on a multilateral basis, on a bilateral basis, or through international intergovernmental organizations. Fourthly, there is a provision to the effect that the Secretary-General, as well as the public and the international scientific community, should be informed, to the greatest extent feasible and practicable, of activities covered by the treaty. Other provisions include the right to collect and remove samples of mineral and other substances; the desirability of exchanging scientific and other personnel on expeditions or installations on the moon to the greatest extent feasible; measures to prevent the disruption of the existing balance of the environment; the obligation to offer shelter in stations, installations, vehicles and so on; the provision of information to the Secretary-General as well as to the public and the international scientific community on any phenomena which could endanger human life or health; use of equipment, vehicles, installations, facilities or supplies of other States in an emergency involving a threat to human life; and so on.

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

For all these reasons, we regard the present draft as a most valuable one and we can only express once more our hope that the outstanding issues can be settled in the course of the Committee's session.

As for the registration treaty, my delegation, like most others, also regards this matter as a necessary and important one, especially with respect to the liability problems. However, we share the view expressed by the Swedish representative concerning the practicability and economic feasibility of registering all space objects. I think we should not overlook the technical difficulties involved. However, great credit goes to the delegations of France and Canada for having introduced this item and having submitted detailed draft provisions. They should be the basis of further careful study by our Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee.

Turning now to questions in the scientific and technical field, I wish first of all on behalf of my delegation to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Ricciardi for the outstanding work he has achieved, taking into account the very limited financial resources at his disposal. We are sorry to see him leave his post at the United Nations. We wish him the very best for his future. We are looking forward to close co-operation with his successor. We had hoped that the procedure of appointing him would be completed in time for official presentation to our Committee and, more important, to afford him the opportunity to become acquainted with his work at a time when the present Expert is still in office.

My delegation attaches to the question of space applications the highest importance and feels that it should be given a very prominent place in the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in the years to come. We have consistently advocated the allocation of more financial resources for this purpose, because, in our view, the programmes of the Expert not only should be maintained at the same level but should be expanded.

I think the representative of Canada made an excellent proposal yesterday when he spoke of the desirability of strong involvement on the part of our Committee in questions of the human environment. I am convinced that the Outer Space Committee could make a valuable contribution to the whole range of questions in connexion with the global monitoring of the earth's environment. The

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

representative of Canada proposed that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should study a paper. I might recall in this respect that the Sub-Committee had already before it a paper of this kind three years ago, if I remember correctly. But what was done? The Sub-Committee simply took note of it, but no follow-up action of any kind was taken. Therefore I think that at this time, when we have the results of the Stockholm Conference and are about to create a new organization for the environment, the Chairman of the Outer Space Committee should be requested by the Committee to ensure, from the very beginning, close co-operation with any environment organization in matters of global monitoring. Such an organization, in our view, should be asked to solicit the views of the Outer Space Committee and to draw on its expertise in matters of monitoring the earth's environment. I hope that this idea will be reflected in an appropriate form in our report to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

In concluding, I should like to state my delegation's views on some specific items before us. First, I wish to congratulate the United States on the successful beginning of the ERTS-I experiment. The initial results have acknowledged the views of those who have from the beginning strongly advocated an early involvement of the Committee, through its Working Group, in this matter.

As far as the Swedish proposal for reconvening the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites is concerned, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the Swedish initiative and fully supports it.

(Mr. Christiani, Austria)

With reference to the proposal of the Soviet Union for discussing a convention on direct broadcast satellites, we think that proposal merits careful study and should be transmitted to the Legal Sub-Committee and the Working Group for further consideration. However, we share the opinion expressed yesterday that the basic principle of the free flow of information and ideas must be maintained.

As far as organizational matters are concerned, my delegation fully supports the proposal made by Japan to convene next year's session of the Committee in June. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will have finished its session by mid-May, so that one month would elapse between its session and that of our Committee.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will need the support of all Members of the United Nations in the years to come; this includes not only the support of all space Powers and potential space Powers but also the active interest and participation of those countries for whose benefit the whole range of space application programmes is primarily intended -- the developing world. I feel strongly that we need greater interest from that side. It is physically impossible for the Expert on Space Applications to visit all those countries and to create awareness of the potentialities and benefits of space applications. It is for the countries themselves to identify their needs, to draw on the existing expertise and to use the machinery of the United Nations in this respect.

For all those reasons, my delegation is in agreement with the representative of Argentina that the time has come for serious consideration of an enlargement of the Committee. I hope that our Committee's report to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly will also reflect this idea.

Sir Laurence McINTYRE (Australia): I should like first of all to join other speakers in welcoming you, Sir, to the chairmanship of our Committee as the latest in a line of talented fellow countrymen and to say how much the Australian delegation looks forward to working under your guidance -- as it did under that of your predecessors -- towards the fulfilment of our common objectives. I should also like to welcome the other officers of the Committee and to express particular pleasure at seeing my old friend and colleague Ambassador Dacu of Romania in the Vice-Chairman's seat.

We are meeting once again as a Committee to prepare a report to the General Assembly covering our work and that of our Sub-Committees over the past year and recommending action for the future. As the main documents for attention we have before us the reports of the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and happily I think we can agree that both reports contain indications of significant progress in 1972.

The Legal Sub-Committee dealt with the two main items during its session in 1972 -- the questions relating to the moon and matters relating to the registration of space objects -- and my delegation would like to offer some comments on both subjects.

We are pleased to see that the Sub-Committee has been able to send forward in its report formulations of a preamble and 21 draft articles for a treaty concerning the moon. I am sure all members can agree that this represents commendable progress in the relatively short time during which the Sub-Committee has so far been able to consider the subject.

At the same time, we would also note that a study of the text will reveal points of substance where there is still no consensus and where further efforts will have to be made to remove differences. As other speakers before me have pointed out -- including you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee in his most interesting and comprehensive introduction of the Sub-Committee's report -- these areas of difference are: first, the scope of the treaty -- that is, whether it should apply simply to the moon or to other celestial bodies as well; second, the question whether the treaty should contain provisions covering the natural resources of the moon; third, the matter of reporting on missions to the

moon; and fourth, the question of liability for damage, in which my delegation has always taken a particularly close interest.

We should not delude ourselves that it will be easy to resolve the divergences of view that exist on these questions. As a contribution to our discussion, however, and in an effort to promote progress, I should like to set out briefly the Australian position on each of them.

As to the first problem, that of the scope of the treaty, for the reasons that were set out by our representative in the Legal Sub-Committee -- which I shall not repeat here -- my delegation can see some advantage, on balance, in now extending the coverage of the treaty to other celestial bodies. In this regard we could support the use of a form of words whereby it would be stated that the treaty would apply to other celestial bodies until provision is made by other treaties in relation to specific celestial bodies -- in line with the suggestion in the foot-note to the first preambular paragraph of the draft treaty as sent forward by the Legal Sub-Committee. Our position is thus similar to that outlined by the representatives of India and Canada in their statements yesterday and just now by the representative of Austria. We take note at the same time of the words of the representative of Sweden, who, in suggesting that we should confine our activities to our own solar system, warned us of the digestive upsets that an excessive legislative appetite might cause.

The second area of difference concerns the controversial article X, dealing with the natural resources of the moon. This was the subject of intensive consideration in Geneva, but the abundance of square brackets in the draft text testifies to the measure of disagreement that still exists. Although of course we are not yet at the point of taking final positions, my delegation has not found in this article the difficulties that some others have seen.

The third problem area was that of reporting on missions to the moon, as covered in article IV (3) of the draft text. Here my delegation would be disposed to accept a provision that would require advance notice of activities falling within the purview of the treaty. In any event this matter clearly requires further consideration.

(Sir Laurence McIntyre, Australia)

As regards the question of liability, dealt with in article XIII of the draft text, my delegation would prefer the deletion of clause 2 of the article, which is at present within square brackets and which attaches liability to States for damage resulting from acts of omission for which they have responsibility.

(Sir Laurence McIntyre, Australia)

My delegation would like to mention one further difficulty we have with the draft treaty. This concerns article XV, which deals with the relationship between this treaty and other space treaties. The Australian delegation in Geneva reserved its position on this article on the ground that in its present form it might lend itself to uncertainty and vagueness of interpretation. We tend to think that it might be better to rely on the substance of article 30 (3) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in handling problems that could arise in regard to the relationship between this and other treaties. We are confident, however, that further discussion will resolve this difficulty.

Having made those observations on the draft treaty, and having pointed to some substantive problems that remain to be solved, my delegation is led to wonder whether it would be possible to secure agreement on the text of a treaty in the time available at this session of our Committee. My delegation has listened to the views of those delegations that have spoken on this point and would be interested to hear the views of those that have not. If there is a general belief, a general feeling, that a supreme effort over the next five days could succeed we would of course be willing to join in it. But we for our part are disposed to think that it would be more satisfactory to send the draft text back to the Legal Sub-Committee for further consideration. In this regard we found ourselves agreeing with the observations made yesterday by the representative of Canada.

As regards the question of registration of space objects, we should like to pay a tribute to the initiative of France and Canada in merging their separate draft conventions into one. This has helped materially, I believe, to advance consideration in detail of this important subject. As I think Committee members are aware, Australia has had hesitations about some aspects of the question of registration, and our position remains substantially as it was at the Geneva session of the Legal Sub-Committee. We believe this is a subject that will require further consideration both in the Sub-Committee and by Governments.

Turning to the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, we note that the Working Group on Remote Sensing held its first meeting in conjunction with the annual session of its parent Sub-Committee. Inevitably this was of a fairly preliminary nature, but it is nevertheless possible even at this early

(Sir Laurence McIntyre, Australia)

stage to detect prospects for progress. The Working Group had some difficulty in handling the large volume of documentation at its disposal, and it asked the Secretary-General to undertake an assessment of it, under subject headings. The objective of this assessment would be to produce a single background document for use during the substantive session of the Working Group next January.

We are pleased to see that the Secretariat has moved quickly to accede to the Working Group's request and that a background document in draft form is now in existence. This is at present being considered by a task force set up to help the Secretariat in the work of screening documents with a view to producing a paper that will be of maximum value to the Working Group, and we look forward to receiving this assessment, which will be put to serious and careful study within the Australian Government.

Before leaving the subject of remote sensing, I should like to note, as have others, that on 23 July last the United States successfully launched its first earth resources technology satellite, ERTS-1. We listened with great interest to the report made yesterday by the representative of the United States on this momentous achievement, on which the Australian delegation would like to offer the United States authorities its sincere congratulations and which is bound, we believe, to have substantial "spin-off", as it were, for the activities of the Working Group.

A study of the Sub-Committee's report will confirm, if such confirmation is needed, that the Expert on Space Applications our colleague Professor Ricciardi, has pursued his duties with energy and dedication in 1972. We owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Ricciardi for his tireless efforts to spread knowledge of the benefits that the applications of space technology can offer. My delegation joins earlier speakers in regretting his departure and in wishing him well. We hope that his successor will be as good at the job as he has been, and we look forward to learning at an early date who that successor will be and to working with him.

The Sub-Committee has decided to continue Professor Ricciardi's programme in 1973 and has approved in principle suggested guidelines for 1974, which represents a welcome innovation in the direction of longer-term planning. We note that in his report to the Sub-Committee Professor Ricciardi also made certain

(Sir Laurence McIntyre, Australia)

suggestions for possible changes of emphasis in his programmes so as to facilitate wider sharing among States of the benefits of space technology. One of these variations would be to taper off the number of panel meetings and to institute a programme of summer schools or training workshops with the aim of providing specialized, practical training in space applications. It will be for the in-coming expert on space applications to take up these and other suggestions, and we look forward to co-operating with him in this work.

Before concluding this statement, I should like to refer to the thoughtful suggestion of the representative of Sweden, made in his statement of Wednesday, that the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites should be reconvened to study new substantive material that has become available in this area. My delegation is unable to take a firm position on the Swedish proposal at this stage, pending further consideration of it, but we have listened to it with interest and will study it with care.

Finally, I recall the suggestion made by the representative of Japan that this session of our Committee should be held earlier in the year than September. From what I have heard, this seems to have attracted favourable comment, and my delegation sees merit in it and hopes that it may be taken up and put into effect. I am sure that mine is not the only delegation that finds that preoccupation with final preparations for the General Assembly and detached and careful attention to the peaceful uses of outer space are not altogether compatible.

Mr. MACRAE (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to repeat on behalf of my delegation the congratulations I was able to offer you in May on the occasion of your election to your high office. Like other representatives who have spoken before me, I am sure that the working of this important Committee will undoubtedly benefit from your wise leadership.

I should also like to repeat my congratulations to Ambassador Datcu on his election to the vice-chairmanship.

Before turning to the major subject that will occupy us at our meetings, there is one important announcement I should like to make. It concerns the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, of which, as I am sure members are aware, the United Kingdom together with the

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Soviet Union and the United States of America are depositories. I have just learned that the Government of Niger has deposited its instrument of ratification in Washington. This brings to five the number of Governments that have deposited instruments of ratification and so brings the Convention into operation with effect from 1 September. I am sure all present here will be gratified at this development and that this important Convention has now entered into force.

Mr. Chairman, in your admirable opening statement to the Committee you reviewed the major events of interest that have occurred in the last year in the field of outer space. It is not my purpose to take up the time of this Committee in referring to the particular achievements of the United Kingdom, but I should just like to single out the successful launches carried out on 28 October 1971 of the United Kingdom's first technological satellite, Prospero, and on 11 December of the United Kingdom's fourth scientific satellite, Ariel 40. I might also mention the first and successful firing of the Skylark rocket in its earth-resources role from Woomera on 8 March 1972. Although these achievements may seem modest by comparison with other achievements of the United States and the Soviet Union, my delegation considers that they are nevertheless worthy of mention.

(Mr. Macrae, United Kingdom)

Of major concern to our Committee is the work carried out in the past year by its two subsidiary bodies, the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We have already heard the masterly survey of the work of the Legal Sub-committee from its Chairman, Mr. Wyzner. Negotiations on two new instruments, the moon treaty and the convention on the registration of objects launched into outer space have brought the reality of international treaties on these two questions a step nearer. The United Kingdom Government has taken a considerable interest and tried to play a constructive part in those negotiations. There is optimism that we may be able to reach agreement on the text of the moon treaty during this session of our Committee. I naturally hope that we shall be able to do so. Yet it is a fact that some points of difference still remain. To take but one example, there is the scope of application of the treaty. Should it apply to the moon or the moon and other celestial bodies. The representative of Sweden had a point when he wondered whether it might not be a trifle arrogant to go outside the solar system. Perhaps the scope of the treaty should indeed be the solar system. One would then talk of the moon and other celestial bodies within the solar system. This is not an insuperable difficulty, but it is one of a number of points which does seem to need further study and reflection.

Another idea in this category is the suggestion from the representative of Brazil that the moon treaty might be reformulated perhaps as a protocol to the Outer Space Treaty. This, too, is an interesting idea which merits consideration. I was struck also by what the representative of Japan had to say in connexion with the natural resources of the moon and whether these could be considered as "the common heritage of mankind". He said, if I remember aright, that it would be many years before mankind would be in a position to exploit fully the natural resources of the moon. He went on to suggest this as a reason for not including this particular phrase in the treaty. My delegation differs with him over that viewpoint. But the conclusion rather than I draw is to wonder whether there is likely to be a significant direct application of the moon treaty in the next few years. Like the

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representatives of Canada and the United States, I wonder whether, if it seems that there are outstanding points which need to be explored in depth, it would not be advisable to let the Legal Sub-Committee have another chance at looking at the question. The representative of Australia has just suggested the same thing. Naturally, it is the first hope of my delegation that we shall be able to complete our consideration of this treaty. But if that is not so, then I do not think that a year's further delay would be disastrous. There is a Latin saying Festina lente or "Hasten slowly". In a field such as this it is surely better to make certain that we get the best possible result even if it may take a little longer.

On the question of registration of objects launched into outer space, my delegation has some doubts about the need for such convention. We nevertheless recognize that many representatives do not share this view, and have therefore made it clear that we would not oppose the wishes of the majority. Indeed I believe that our participation in the Legal Sub-Committee on this question has not been unhelpful. We very much hope that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee may see the evolution of a text which is both acceptable and also workable.

Turning now to the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, I should like to join with other representatives in congratulating Professor Ricciardi, our Expert on Space Applications, for the very valuable work which he has done. We are sad that he is leaving us and we hope that his future in terms of its brightness may not compare unfavourably with the more incandescent of the stars. If the budget with which he has had to work has remained small, it is nevertheless a fact that as a result of his energies interest in space applications has increased very greatly. The number of fellowships taken up has shown a startling rise, and my delegation is more than happy that the United Kingdom's offer of scholarships at the Post Office Engineering School at Leafield has produced no less than six applicants this year as compared to half that number in the previous year.

(Mr. Macrae, United Kingdom)

It is perhaps at this point appropriate to pay a tribute to our hard-working Secretariat. The amount of documentation which it has to process is very large. There have been suggestions that in the case of the documents for the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee these tend to be too much and too late. But there may be some substance in this charge. But to my mind it merely underlines the need for the strengthening of the Outer Space Affairs Division, and we look forward with anticipation to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on this subject.

Another aspect of the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, of great significance, is the question of the remote sensing of the earth by satellite. In this connexion the successful launching of the ERTS A satellite on 23 July is a most important and significant development. My delegation would wish to offer its warmest congratulations to the United States Government and to NASA on this splendid achievement. One of the features of the ERTS programme of special interest is its co-operative nature fully emphasized by the representative of the United States in his statement yesterday. In the case of the United Kingdom, no less than five groups are using data from the ERTS A satellite and it is hoped that others will be able to participate in the use of data from ERTS B and the earth resources experiments in the Skylab spacecraft.

I, myself, was privileged earlier this year to take up the invitation of the United States representative on the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to visit the special control centre for the ERTS A programme set up in Goddard Space Base. I would commend such a visit to all members of this Committee if they wish to get a real understanding of remote sensing. That the potentialities are great is beyond doubt. But it is not always fully realized how complex is the process to convert the raw data transmitted by the remote sensing satellite into useful and meaningful results. It is an expensive process and it requires extensive information in the form of ground observations of the particular area under consideration. Without these, it is very difficult to make sensible deductions about what is being viewed. This suggests to my delegation that we need not be in too much of a hurry to examine the legal and organizational aspects of remote sensing. To do so might result in our wasting our time over problems which in practice will turn out either to be

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non-existent or very different from what we now imagine. We should adopt a cautious and gradualist approach. I have every confidence that these pitfalls are known to the Working Group and the task force. We shall continue to follow their progress with great interest.

My colleague from the Soviet Union has referred to the initiative of his Government in submitting a draft convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. We shall of course be considering this matter during the General Assembly. But as it has been raised, it will perhaps be in order to make a few preliminary comments.

The representative of Sweden in his statement on 6 September listed the developments in the field of direct broadcast satellites during the past two years. In particular, he mentioned the decisions and recommendations adopted by the International Telecommunications Union at the World Administrative Radio Conference for Space Telecommunications in Geneva last year. Representatives may know that at that Conference the International Telecommunications Union inserted in its radio regulations a framework of regulatory and technical conditions which would preclude unauthorized direct broadcasting from one country into another without the latter's consent.

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At first sight, this would seem to render redundant much of the draft convention and it might nearly be enough if the International Telecommunication Union were to update annex VI of document A/AC.105/83 which deals with the technical factors. This thought is strengthened by the fact -- I believe I am right in saying this -- that reception by an ordinary radio receiver from a direct broadcasting satellite is not yet a reality, nor is it likely to be one for several years to come. Nevertheless, I recognize that there could be a desire for some further discussion of what is undoubtedly a topic both of importance and of intrinsic interest. And in that case it would seem that the Working Group on Direct Broadcasting would be the right place for such discussion to take place.

As of now, we are not convinced that the Legal Sub-Committee is the right place to consider this question, and any consideration must of course be without prejudice to the general principles of free flow of information, which is central to our way of life.

Finally, there has been some discussion about the purpose and direction of this Committee. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have said that we should avoid a rubber-stamping role and should provide leadership and give directives. I certainly believe that this is something to which we should give serious consideration during our present deliberations. As I understand it, the Legal Sub-Committee continues to do valuable work in the fields in which we indicate that this would be appropriate. It is the role of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee which is more doubtful. I think it would indeed be helpful if we were to invite that Sub-Committee itself to give serious consideration to what its role ought to be. This is not to say that we should not give the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee guidelines. We should. I was much struck by the suggestion by the representative of Canada that that Sub-Committee should be asked to look into the potentialities of satellites and in particular in monitoring the earth's environment.

That is all I have to say at this time. I would reserve the right to speak again should it seem necessary to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. MIGLIUOLO (Italy): Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to join previous speakers in congratulating you warmly on your election. Your presence in the Chair, Sir, represents the continuity in a brilliant tradition of experienced and skilful chairmanship set by the Government of Austria by providing this Committee with the benefit of the co-operation of some of its best Ambassadors. You may be assured, Sir, of the full co-operation of my delegation in the fulfilment of your important task.

May I take this opportunity to renew the expression of our full confidence and esteem in the other officers of the Committee, Ambassador Datcu of Romania and Minister Souza e Silva of Brazil, as well as in your able assistants of the Secretariat.

After the inspiring address of the Secretary-General, whose presence among us my delegation welcomed as new testimony of the importance of this Committee, and after your comprehensive and lucid introductory remarks, I would consider it preposterous for my delegation to attempt to review all the space activities carried out in the last 12 months -- the more so as this past year has been as rich as usual in achievements in space. I would like to extend our congratulations to all governments which have scored new successes, in particular to the Governments of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for the reconnaissance missions to Mars, conducted by American and Soviet automatic spaceships, which have stolen the thunder from all other happenings, including, perhaps, the last landing of American astronauts on the moon.

One of the most convincing proofs that space has become a normal part of our lives is represented, indeed, by the nonchalance with which the public today receives the news of space endeavours such as the lunar landings, which only a few years ago would have propelled huge crowds into the streets. If lunar landings are old history, Mars has still the glamour of novelty, and the new, magnificent pictures of the Martian landscape collected by the Mariner spaceship have given a new dimension to the research effort of the major space Powers.

Furthermore, the Mars missions seem to us particularly significant inasmuch as they, through the exchange of data between the United States and the USSR, mark a first practical implementation of the operational scientific and technical co-operation in space which was sanctioned in Moscow by the agreement signed by the President of the United States, Richard Nixon, and by the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev.

Such co-operation is the best omen for the future of man in space. My delegation wishes to express the hope that all countries, particularly the developing countries, will benefit from the successful achievements of the individual and joint endeavours of the space super-Powers.

I shall not, this year, use the time of the Committee by reviewing the scientific and technical research conducted by my country in outer space. Such activities will be described in detail in the periodic United Nations document related to the space activities of Member States and other United Nations bodies. Our space programme is based mainly in participation in the European initiatives, whilst national activities are aimed at present at some important experiments in the field of space communications in the wave band above 10 G.H.

I wish, instead, to make some general remarks on the way this Committee is performing its work, following the original mandate it received from the General Assembly and the various recommendations which have been added in more recent times. According to the decision of the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, this Committee must be the focal point of the entire United Nations family in the study of the utilization of outer space and of practical applications of space techniques.

This is an important role and my delegation feels that, in order to meet the expectations of the general membership of the United Nations, this Committee must not be too selective or too timid in interpreting its mandate. There is, in fact, an increasing awareness in public opinion of the practical benefits that stem from space research. Many hopes are encouraged every day by news like that published only a couple of days ago by The New York Times on the spin-off of patents which were derived from NASA activities and are opening far-reaching possibilities to meet man's daily needs.

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

It is our contention that this Committee must keep under constant study the rapidly expanding realm of space research and applications; must identify, with the help of our Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the patterns of future developments of United Nations interests; must outline progressively integrated rules of behaviour and of space law, on the proposal of its Legal Sub-Committee; must, finally, present to the General Assembly every year updated guidelines and suggestions to be considered for implementation by the whole United Nations family.

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

As an example of the matters which could be kept under study by our Sub-Committees for updating the relevant guidelines and recommendations, my delegation has just asked the Secretariat to distribute a list of topics which we consider to be of importance and interest for the United Nations in the framework of an orderly development of space research and applications. I should like to ask the Secretariat to circulate it as a working document of this Committee. It is intended only to be thought-provoking -- it is not a final outline -- and we would welcome comments and reactions from the other delegations. For our part, we shall comment on it at a later stage. For the moment I shall limit myself to pointing out that we tried to cover all the main fields of possible action: the development of international programmes, the education and training activities, the exchange of information and the sponsoring by the United Nations of different space ranges.

I wish now to comment briefly on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/101). It is my Government's opinion that the work carried out by that subsidiary body at its eleventh session was highly valuable. We therefore feel indebted to Professor Wyzner for his able chairmanship of that Sub-Committee. However, further elaboration is needed on the two subjects which were given priority: the draft treaty concerning the moon and the draft treaty on the registration of objects launched into outer space. Both those matters are delicate as they have some important implications of a political nature. With regard to the draft treaty concerning the moon, the Italian delegation would like to associate itself with the optimistic wishes for the speedy completion of its elaboration voiced by you, Mr. Chairman, in your opening statement. However, I should also like to express the opinion that it would be unwise to indulge in excessive haste with the sole purpose of ensuring that the draft treaty concerning the moon is finalized at this session of the Committee and submitted to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Many intrinsic difficulties still exist. They have been mentioned by previous speakers and I do not wish to be repetitious. May I add, however, that my delegation shares the view expressed by Ambassador Frazao of Brazil on the necessity that every new agreement should entail a real advancement in the establishment of a corpus juris governing man's presence and activities in outer space.

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

As to the other draft treaty regarding the registration of objects launched into outer space, we believe that such a treaty would constitute a logical complement of the 1967 Treaty concerning the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as well as of the Convention on Liability for Damages Caused by Objects Launched into Outer Space.

My delegation wishes to praise the delegations of France and Canada for the goodwill they showed in combining in a single document the two draft treaties they had originally proposed. We feel, however, that longer elaboration on that draft treaty is still needed.

I should like now to make a few remarks on the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/102). As usual the Sub-Committee performed diligent work, for which we warmly congratulate its Chairman, Mr. Carver of Australia. In particular, my delegation welcomes and supports the proposed programmes for space applications for 1973 and 1974, while expressing its full appreciation for the outstanding contribution made by Professor Ricciardi in laying the groundwork for such programmes and in performing a dedicated and extremely useful task in his two years as the United Nations Expert on Space Applications.

My delegation concurs in the support of the Sub-Committee's proposal to continue United Nations sponsorship of the TERLS and CELPA sounding rocket ranges.

As for the other concepts contained in the Sub-Committee's report, my delegation is not completely convinced that the Sub-Committee's goal should be only "to note" and "to welcome" other bodies' proposals and reports, as appears in the chapters dedicated to the promotion of space technology and to the scientific and technical aspects of international co-operation.

It seems to the Italian delegation that the Sub-Committee should take a more active part in the consideration of the various topics listed in those chapters and should add to the recommendations and opinions expressed by other bodies within and outside the United Nations its own contribution of opinions and suggestions in order to supply this Committee and the General Assembly with a true and complete dimension of the matters involved.

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

Finally, my delegation -- like, I am sure, many others -- is following with the utmost attention the activity of the Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites, and we are confident that its final report will contain significant and useful conclusions and clarification on the very important subjects entrusted to it for study and consideration. The fact that Mr. Franco Fiorio was instructed to extend his full co-operation and experience for the success of the activity of this new body represents the best evidence of the importance that the Italian Government attaches to the successful completion of its mandate.

In this regard my delegation was somewhat surprised by the concern expressed yesterday by the representative of the United States -- and in a way reiterated today by the representative of the United Kingdom -- who suggested that the Working Group should give priority to the technical results of ERTS-1 before attempting to engage itself in the legal and organizational matters at its next substantive session.

It should be recalled that the mandate of the Working Group, which was unanimously approved at the fourteenth session of this Committee and unanimously sanctioned by the General Assembly in resolution 2778 (XXVI), contained the following requests:

"Make recommendations for possible development, provision and operation of space remote sensing data collection and utilization systems in the United Nations or other international framework, taking into account the economic, social and legal implications for the international community that might arise as a result of selecting any particular system."

(A/AC.105/95, p.5, para. 17)

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

The mandate also states:

"The objectives of the Working Group's study will be to promote the optimum utilization of this space application including the monitoring of the total earth environment... taking into account, as may be relevant, the sovereign rights of States and the provisions of the space Treaty." (Ibid., para. 16)

The same mandate directed the Working Group to begin its substantive work, without any limitations, at the time when an assessment of the results of the ERTS-1 experiment could be made. During the preparatory meeting of the Working Group, upon the advice of the United States delegation on the date by which such an assessment could be made, it was agreed that by the end of this year enough preliminary results would be available for a preliminary assessment, and thus the date of February 1973 was chosen for the first substantive meeting of the Working Group.

Yesterday's statement by the United States representative might seem to indicate that such substantive work should be limited to assessing the technical results of the ERTS-1 experiment. It seems to my delegation that this would hardly be consistent with the mandate entrusted to the Working Group. Therefore it might be useful to clarify the matter during our Committee's debates for the Working Group's benefit.

Turning now to the subject of direct broadcasting by satellites, my delegation wishes to state that it shares the concern of many other delegations about the necessity of seeing to it that this new, powerful tool of information and education will be used for the benefit of all mankind. I doubt that it is necessary to restate here the Italian position, which I believe is clearly known to this Committee, as we took a very active part in the establishment of the Working Group on broadcasting. However, I wish to confirm on this occasion the full support of the Italian delegation for the proposal to reconvene that Working Group, presented by Sweden. Our support is prompted by the same reasons as those so aptly expressed by Mr. Rydbeck of Sweden.

Finally, I wish to state that the proposal put forward by the representative of Japan with regard to the timing of the sessions of this Committee seems to my delegation to deserve close consideration, for the reasons so lucidly stated this

(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

morning by Sir Laurence McIntyre of Australia. However, it is my impression that it might be expedient to reconsider the whole schedule of meetings both of this Committee and of its subsidiary organs, so that we may assess whether it would not be more practical in view of a number of circumstances for the session of the Committee itself to be rescheduled for a somewhat earlier date in the year, perhaps in the first part of May.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to thank the representative of Italy very cordially for his kind words of welcome addressed to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman.

I shall now call on the Secretary of the Committee, who wishes to make a few technical comments concerning possible dates for our next session.

Mr. ABDEL-GHANI (Secretary of the Committee): The representative of Canada asked whether the reports of the two Sub-Committees would be available in time for the consideration of the members of the Committee if the Committee held its session next year in June, as proposed by the representative of Japan, instead of in September. By "in time" I mean sufficiently in advance of the session of the Committee.

Firstly, the period available now for convening the Committee in June 1973 is from 18 June to 29 June. That is the period available now but it may not be available a few weeks from now. If the Committee agrees now to hold its session during those two weeks in June, there will be no additional expense. If the Committee is convened at another time around that period, additional expenses will be incurred -- which is, of course, not desirable in view of present circumstances.

The reports of the two Sub-Committees would be available in all the languages in advance of the session of the Committee. The reproduction of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, which will end its session next year by 20 April, usually requires four weeks, and its reproduction in New York will not require more than that -- indeed probably less than three weeks. That means that the report will be available one month in advance of the date proposed for the convening of the

(Mr. Abdel-Ghani, Secretary
of the Committee)

Committee. The report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee is usually shorter than that of the Legal Sub-Committee, and its reproduction requires not more than two weeks. As it will finish its work by 18 May, its report will be available by the beginning of June, about two weeks before the date proposed for the convening of the main Committee.

That is the information I have in reply to the question of the representative of Canada. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to speak on another matter. The representative of Canada and the representative of Austria have said that the Committee is interested in and should concern itself with the question of the environment. In this connexion the Secretariat will circulate to the members of the Committee for their information a paper of a panel of experts which was organized by the Outer Space Division and met at the Conference on the Environment in Stockholm to deal with the question of the use of remote sensing from aircraft and spacecraft for monitoring environmental changes and conditions. This paper, which will be circulated for the information of the members of the Committee, contains the statements made at the opening of the panel by five well-known experts in this field, and complements the two papers which were prepared by the Secretariat about a year ago on the question of remote sensing and the environment.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Committee Secretary for that valuable information. Delegations will no doubt wish to consider it in deciding on the appropriate date for the next session of our Committee.

We have now come to the conclusion of our morning meeting. We have now heard 16 interesting and valuable statements, giving us a clearer picture of the feelings in the Committee on some of the most important outstanding issues before us. I wish to express my satisfaction -- and I am sure I can speak on behalf of the Committee -- that those statements reflected one of the finest qualities of this Committee, namely, the spirit of co-operation and understanding prevailing in our work.

I think that the Committee would greatly benefit from another day of general debate and it is my understanding that several delegations which have not yet spoken desire to do so -- but on Monday, not this afternoon. After that, perhaps some of the observers present here will give us the benefit of their remarks.

Of course I am in the hands of the Committee, but I feel that after concluding the general debate, we might turn to the other task of this Committee, namely, to decide what products of our work we can submit -- some, perhaps, in a finished state -- to the United Nations General Assembly. I therefore would ask representatives to be good enough to start considering this over the week-end and perhaps use the time available for further consultations to consider what products this Committee could submit to the Assembly with a view to making positive contributions to the success of the Assembly session. We might also wish to address ourselves to the question of what we can do to ensure the success of the Committee's future work. We have a great variety of tasks and I think we will find it easy to make a determination on this matter.

I would also ask representatives to consider what has been said during these three days. I am perfectly aware, without referring to a specific subject, of the counsels of moderation and of the optimism which has been expressed, and I hope that all this will enable us to come to a fruitful conclusion of our work next week.

I should like to thank all those who have spoken this week for their contributions and again to express my gratitude and that of the Vice-Chairman for the support and confidence that have been expressed. We are greatly encouraged by this and thank all of you very much indeed.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.