

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Legal Subcommittee**

Unedited transcript

768th Meeting
Tuesday, 1 April 2008, 3 p.m.
Vienna

Chairman: Mr. V. Kopal (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.13 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon distinguished delegates. I now declare open the 768th meeting of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

I would first like to inform you of our programme of work for this afternoon. We will continue our consideration of agenda item, General Exchange of Views. Then the Working Group under item 6 will hold its first meeting under the chairmanship of Mr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece. I see him here in this room and he will preside over the first session of this Working Group.

At around 4.00 p.m. I intend to adjourn this plenary meeting of the Subcommittee for the second session of the IISL/ECSL Symposium on Legal Implications of Space Applications for Global Climate Change.

Are there any questions and comments on this proposed schedule?

I see none.

It is so adopted.

General exchange of views (agenda item 5)

And we can now start. We will continue our consideration of item 5 on our agenda, General Exchange of Views.

Distinguished delegates, I have so far two countries on the list of countries, the representatives of which wish to speak and I give the floor to the first one and it is the distinguished representative of India.

Mr. R. G. NADADUR (India): Mr. Chairman, at the outset, the Indian delegation expresses its hearty congratulations to Professor Vladimir Kopal of the Czech Republic on being elected as the new Chairman for the forty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations COPUOS.

We are pleased to see you in the Chair guiding the deliberations during the current session. We are confident that under your able leadership, the Legal Subcommittee, with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, will contribute significantly to the progress of the matters related to the agenda items identified for the session.

The Indian delegation places on record our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Raimundo González Aninat of Chile for his excellent contribution during the last two years as the Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee.

The Indian delegation would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Madam Mazlan Othman as the new Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, we are happy to note that during the current session, the International Institute for Space Law and the Centre for Space Law of Europe have jointly organized a Symposium on Legal

In its resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that, beginning with its thirty-ninth session, the Committee would be provided with unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. This record contains the texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages as transcribed from taped recordings. The transcripts have not been edited or revised.

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Implications of Space Applications for Global Climate Change. We look forward to a good amount of information exchange and knowledge-sharing during the Symposium.

Mr. Chairman, let me briefly present to the Subcommittee the significant achievements made by India since the last session in March 2007.

In April 2007, India's work horse, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, successfully launched the AGELATE(?) satellite of the Italian Space Agency into its precise orbit. AGELATE(?) was a high-energy astro-physics mission of the Italian Space Agency and this was the first time a commercial primary satellite belonging to an international customer was launched using the PSLV. The successful launch of this PSLV, which was the tenth consecutive success of PSLV, has reiterated its reliability and versatility to launch satellites in various types of orbits and also to carry out multiple satellite missions.

In September 2007, India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the latest communications satellite, the INSAT-OCR(?) from India's Space Port in Srihadekota(?). This launch was the fifth flight in the GSLV series. INSAT-OCR(?) is a communications satellite which carries 12 high-powered K-Band transponders designed to provide direct to home television services, radio picture transmission, digital satellite news gathering and also to serve the National Informatics Centre for its RESAT(?) connectivity.

More recently, in January 2008, we had carried out yet another launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, this time to carry a dedicated commercial satellite for yet another international customer. The launch of this PSLV was the eleventh consecutive successful flight of the PSLV.

Mr. Chairman, in the area of space applications programmes for national development, many programmes were ratified(?) and have provided very valuable inputs to our nation. In our effort to provide the quality education across the country, the Tele-Education Project undertaken a couple of years ago with the launch of a dedicated EDUSAT satellite has made considerable impact in the country. Today, more than 30,000 EDUSAT classrooms have been established in India. Tele-education networks have benefited students from schools and colleges, teachers, professionals and training institutes towards providing expert medical consultancy which is available in cities to patients in remote and inaccessible areas. The Tele-Medicine Project has proved to be very successful.

Presently, the Tele-Medicine Network consists of 320 hospitals, wherein 270 hospitals in remote, rural and district levels and eight mobile hospitals have been connected to 42 super speciality hospitals located in the major cities. Over the years, a number of tele-education, tele-medicine and Village Resource Centres have been commissioned and provided better outreach.

Mr. Chairman, a remote sensing satellite, CARTOSAT(?) -2, meant for obtaining high-resolution, scene-specific SPOT imageries from a highly agile platform, was launched last year. This satellite is providing very useful high-resolution imageries for its use in national development.

In India, a single window delivery mechanism for a variety of space-based products and services, such as tele-education, tele-medicine, information on natural resources for planning and development at local level, interactive advanceries(?) on agriculture, fisheries, land, water resource management, livestock management, is being catered by the mechanism called Village Resource Centre. More than 320 Village Resource Centres have been established across the country providing valuable inputs to the local community and helping them in addressing a variety of social needs. The number of these Village Resource Centres is likely to go up to 400 by the end of the year. We believe that this concept of Village Resource Centre is the right and appropriate application for other developing countries as well.

Mr. Chairman, a very important segment of India's space-related activity has been the thrust towards international cooperation. We continue to cooperate with a number of space and other related agencies which has made India possible to enter into a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements with various countries.

In November 2007, the Indian Space Research Organization and the Russian Federal Space Agency signed an Agreement on Joint Lunar Research and Exploration. This cooperation _____ (not clear) CHANDRIAN(?) -2, a joint lunar mission involving a lunar orbiting spacecraft and a Lander Rover on the Moon's surface. Towards the Sentinel-Asia Project Initiative, which is conceived under the aegis of the Asian-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, India will be participating by contributing in all the three modes which include the data provider, training capacity-building and user nodes.

Mr. Chairman, takes special interest in providing the expertise and services for developing

countries in the application of space technology. The Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific, which is affiliated to the United Nations and operating from India, is an initiative in this direction. The Centre has so far carried out 26 post-graduate programmes with a duration of nine months. In addition, it has organized 19 short-term courses and workshops. So far 726 scholars from 30 countries from the Asian-Pacific region and 26 scholars from 16 countries outside the Asian-Pacific region have benefited from the educational activities of this Centre.

Mr. Chairman, in September 2007, India had the proud privilege to host the Fifty-Eighth International Astronautical Congress in Hyderabad, under the umbrella of the International Astronautical Federation, the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law.

Being the fiftieth year of the Space Age, special events befitting the occasion were organized. The Congress received very widespread participation, both from national and international space communities.

India hosted the Seventeenth UN/IAF Workshop which was held at the National Remote Centre Agency outside Hyderabad during September 2007. The Workshop was co-sponsored by the European Space Agency. Delegates at this Workshop held intense deliberations on the role of space technologies in implementing sustainable development programmes in developing countries with the focus on food security.

The Second Meeting of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems was held in Bangalore in September 2007 to discuss the points relating to promoting the enhancement of universal access to space-based navigation and positioning systems as well as their compatibility and interoperability. Subsequently, in November 2007, the Fourteenth Session of the Asian-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum, APRSAF, Fourteenth Workshop was held in Bangalore. ISRO was the co-sponsoring agency in association with JAXA of Japan for this important event.

Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation considers that the development of space law is crucial to the orderly and organized exploration of space for the peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind. In our view, the Legal Subcommittee occupies a leading and prestigious role in evolving and safeguarding the entire

body of international space law which was founded, so far, on ethical principles.

We reaffirm that the five United Nations space treaties evolve through consensus and accepted by a large number of countries, constitute the cornerstone of international space law. The review of status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space, therefore, is an important subject to encourage adherence to these by the States which are yet to become parties to them.

The Indian delegation is of the view that the GSO is an integral part of outer space and is thus governed by the outer space treaties. The continuing debate on this subject and on the subject of definition and delimitation of outer space is crucial to arrive at a common understanding.

Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation attaches high importance to the subject of space debris. The space debris issue in India's missions has been addressed in the design and operational phases of its launch vehicle and satellite programmes. Reduction of space debris is of utmost importance as it poses a great threat to all the space assets. International cooperation is needed and appropriate and affordable strategies are to be formulated to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions. India considers that the principle of common but differential responsibility should be adopted for this purpose. This means that those countries which are largely responsible for creation of space debris and those who have space capabilities should contribute to the debris mitigation efforts in a significant manner compared to other countries.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, the Indian delegation would like to reiterate its commitment to views of outer space for peaceful purposes in the common interest of mankind. We support the development and continuous evolution of law for the peaceful use and exploration of outer space so as to ensure benefits to all countries. We are of the view that the sovereign right of every country to have access to space and opportunity to utilize space for developmental programmes should be well respected. It is in this context that the safety and security of space assets should be well preserved for better prosperity of mankind.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you distinguished representative of India for your statement under item 5 on general exchange of views. In your presentation, in

your speech, you have first summed up the Indian activities in outer space and it is clear that the list of such activities and achievements that you have reached is very long and includes very important and original points. I do not wish to repeat everything here but it is well known that India is a pioneer in using outer space and space technology for purposes of education, for tele-medicine and other important aims.

I also have to repeat what you have already included in your statement that India organized, together with the International Astronautical Federation, the International Academy of Astronautics and the International Institute of Space Law, for the Astronautical Congress that was held last year in Hyderabad. And also, and this is important particularly for the United Nations, that also the Seventeenth United Nations IAF Workshop was held at Hyderabad during September 2007.

You also took a position as to different issues and aspects of the current development of space law and I would like to repeat what you said that India considers that the development of space law is crucial to the orderly and organized exploration of space for the peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind and that you have reaffirmed your participation in the five United Nations space treaties.

Finally, you also expressed your support for the development and continuous evolution of law for the peaceful use and exploration of outer space so as to ensure benefits to all countries.

So thank you once again. I would also like to thank you for the kind words that you addressed to the Chair, to the former Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee and to the Office led by the new Director, Dr. Mazlan Othman. Once again, thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, the second speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Poland.

Mr. R. DRZAZGA (Poland): Thank you. Mr. Chairman, let me first to congratulate you on your election as the new Chairman of the Subcommittee. We are very happy to see you chairing this session since your experience and knowledge are well known and highly appreciated. We are sure that under your leadership we will achieve substantial progress in our work.

Let me also express our appreciation to excellent work of the previous Chairman of the Subcommittee, Ambassador González.

If you allow, I will now touch briefly upon certain issues that will be discussed during our session.

With regard to agenda item number 6, Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, Poland shares the commonly expressed view about the profound importance of the international legal framework concerning outer space. All activities in outer space should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the treaties.

Poland is a party to four of the United Nations outer space treaties. Poland is not a party to the 1979 Moon Treaty but it is our understanding that discussion on different aspects of this treaty should be continued.

Outer space should be viewed as the province of mankind and all States should be able to benefit from its use. In this context, one must underline that the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit should be ensured for all States.

As regards definition and delimitation of outer space, Poland is ready to bring its substantial commitment to further works in this Legal Subcommittee on that issue.

My delegation looks forward to a productive and fruitful discussion in this regard.

We are also looking forward for further collaborations on the draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. Poland attaches considerable importance to this Protocol since its provision would enable to enhance the possibility of financing the space activities by private entities.

Poland welcomes capacity-building in space law as a new item on the Legal Subcommittee agenda. We hope that it will contribute to further enhancement of cooperation and assistance to developing countries. Exchange of views on the national legislation regarding space activities may contribute significantly to that end and may constitute an important factor for further development of international cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to assure you of our full cooperation in the course of this session. We are sure that under your leadership, the outcome of this session will be fruitful and beneficial for further development of international space law. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much distinguished representative of Poland for your

statement. I believe that though this statement was perhaps shorter in comparison with other statements, it was also meaningful and I would like to pinpoint at least your full support of the profound importance of the international legal framework concerning outer space and that these activities should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the treaties.

You also explained your interest that, though not being party to the fifth of the United Nations space treaties, you would support continuation of the discussion on different aspects of this Agreement.

And finally, I would also like to mention that you expressed your interest in further collaboration of the draft Protocol on Matters Specific to Space Assets to the Convention of Cape Town that was adopted in 2001 and that you attach, your country attaches considerable importance to this document which is being elaborated.

Thank you once again and I would also like to thank you for the kind words that you addressed to the previous Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee and to the present Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, my list of speakers for this afternoon on the item, General Exchange of Views, item 5, I think, has been exhausted. Is there any other delegation wishing to speak this afternoon on this particular item?

I see none. So we will continue the discussion on this item tomorrow and hopefully we will also conclude our discussion on this item so I urge those delegations which would like to make their statements but have not been able to do it yet to use this last opportunity which will be tomorrow morning.

And I think we therefore can pass to our further programme for this afternoon. I will shortly adjourn this meeting of the Subcommittee so that the Working Group on Item 6 can hold its first meeting, prior to the second session of the IISL/ECSL Symposium which will begin at 4.00 p.m.

But before doing so, I would like to remind delegates of our schedule of work for tomorrow morning. We will meet promptly at 10.00 a.m. At that time, we will continue and hopefully conclude our consideration of agenda item 5, General Exchange of Views. We will also continue our consideration of agenda item 6, Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, and agenda item 7, Information on the Activities of International

Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations Relating to Space Law.

Time permitting, the Working Group under item 6 will hold its second meeting under the chairmanship of Dr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece.

Are there any questions or comments on this proposed schedule for tomorrow morning?

I see none and, therefore, I now invite Mr. Vassilios Cassapoglou of Greece to chair the first meeting of the Working Group on Item 6, Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space.

And this meeting of the Subcommittee is now adjourned until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Thank you for your attention.

The meeting closed at 3.40 p.m.