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English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-fifth session
Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2018
Agenda item 12: Near-Earth Objects

Proposal to re-name the agenda item on “Near-Earth objects”

Submitted by the Chairpersons of the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN) and the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG)

Introduction

1. The International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN) and the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) were established in 2014 as a result of the Recommendations of the Action Team on Near-Earth Objects for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat (documents [A/AC.105/C.1/L.329](#) and [A/AC.105/C.1/L.330](#)), and recommendations of the Working Group on Near-Earth Objects of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee ([A/AC.105/1038](#), Annex III, para. 11), which were welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution [A/RES/68/75](#) (para. 8) of 11 December 2013. The recommendations provide for a coordinated international response to the NEO impact threat, aimed at ensuring information-sharing in discovery, monitoring and physical characterization of potentially hazardous NEOs with a view that all countries, in particular developing countries with limited capacity in predicting and mitigating a NEO impact, are aware of potential threats, and emphasize the need for an effective emergency response and disaster management in the event of a NEO impact threat.
2. IAWN is a virtual network linking together institutions performing functions such as discovery, monitoring and physical characterization of the potentially hazardous near-Earth object population and maintaining an internationally recognized clearing house for the receipt, acknowledgment and processing of all near-Earth object observations. It was established as a collaborative community of space researchers who would also recommend criteria and thresholds for notification of an emerging impact threat and recommend strategies using well-defined communication plans and procedures to assist Governments in their response to predicted impact consequences.
3. There are currently thirteen official signatories to the IAWN Statement of Intent, representing observatories and space institutions from Europe, China, Colombia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America,



and an amateur observer from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These participants bring to bear a variety of ground and space-based assets to detect and observe NEOs, as well as abilities in orbit computation, potential impact prediction and modelling of potential impact effects. The signatories to the Statement of Intent recognize the importance of collaborative data analysis and being adequately prepared for communications with a variety of audiences about NEOs, their close approaches to Earth, and impact risks.

4. SMPAG also has an interface role and links Member States with space agencies and other relevant entities. Its responsibilities include laying out the framework, timeline and options for initiating and executing space mission response activities as well as promoting opportunities for international collaboration on research and techniques for the mitigation of risks from hazardous near-Earth objects.

5. SMPAG members at present include: AEM (Mexico), ASI (Italy), Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), Belspo (Belgium), CNES (France), CNSA (China), DLR (Germany), ESA, ISA (Israel), JAXA (Japan), KASI (Republic of Korea), NASA (USA), ROSA (Romania), ROSCOSMOS (Russian Federation), SSAU (Ukraine), SUPARCO (Pakistan), UKSA (UK) and IAWN (ex officio). SMPAG observers at present include: Association of Space Explorers (ASE), European Southern Observatory (ESO), International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), International Astronomical Union (IAU), Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

6. The two groups have their work facilitated by the United Nations on behalf of the international community (A/AC.105/C.1/L.329). The General Assembly in its resolution 71/90 (para. 9) of 6 December 2016 also noted with satisfaction that the Office for Outer Space Affairs serves as the permanent secretariat to SMPAG.

7. In accordance with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's decision (A/AC.105/1109, para. 182), SMPAG and IAWN continue to be invited as observers to the sessions of the Subcommittee and report annually on the progress of their work on planetary defence. The two entities maintain their websites at <http://iawn.net/> and <http://smpag.net/>.

8. At the fifty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, IAWN and SMPAG presented to the Subcommittee conference room paper A/AC.105/C.1/2017/CRP.25, containing information on initial agreements achieved in close coordination between SMPAG and IAWN on the criteria and thresholds for impact response actions, which also have direct relevance for Member States in terms of information sharing on a potential NEO threat.

9. The present conference room paper contains the proposal to re-name the present agenda item of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to better reflect the scope of information exchange under this agenda item among member States.

Proposal for re-naming the agenda item “Near-Earth objects”

10. The proposal reads:

The present agenda item on “Near-Earth objects” of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to be re-named to “Near-Earth objects and planetary defence”.

Rationale

11. In its resolution A/RES/72/77 of 7 December 2017 on International Cooperation on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the General Assembly in paragraph 10:

“Reiterates the importance of information-sharing in discovering, monitoring and physically characterizing potentially hazardous near-Earth objects to ensure that all countries, in particular developing countries with limited capacity for predicting and mitigating a near-Earth object impact, are aware of potential

threats, emphasizes the need for capacity-building for effective emergency response and disaster management in the event of a near-Earth object impact, and notes with satisfaction the work carried out by the International Asteroid Warning Network and the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group to strengthen international cooperation to mitigate the potential threat posed by near-Earth objects, with the support of the Office, serving as the permanent secretariat of the Advisory Group”.

12. In this regard, the proposal for re-naming the item to read “Near-Earth objects and planetary defence” aims at better reflecting the content of information exchange under this agenda item on near-Earth objects of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee among member States and permanent observers. This includes all the aspects of ongoing activities, from NEO discovery, monitoring and characterization, to determining the most effective and appropriate methods for mitigation of risks from hazardous near-Earth objects, as well as understanding the practical and legal implications of such activities.
