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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

Governance and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies: proposed workplan

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its sixtieth session, in 2017, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fifth session, in 2018, containing a proposed workplan on how to improve overall governance and the method of work of the Committee as a whole. States members of the Committee would be invited to provide ideas. The conference room paper, as revised on the basis of discussions at the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fifth session, would then be submitted to the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-seventh session, in 2018. The paper, as further revised at that session, would be submitted to the Committee for consideration at its sixty-first session in June 2018 (A/72/20, para. 327).
2. In response to this request, the Secretariat has reviewed the reports on the sessions of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees in the past decade, in order to give a comprehensive picture of considerations on organizational matters and methods of work. The summary of the paragraphs can be found below in the present conference room paper.
3. Further, the Secretariat has developed a proposed workplan for the period 2019-2021, aimed at reaching a decision on a set of concrete and detailed proposals, to be considered by the Committee at its sixty-third session, in 2021. The proposed process is to task the Group of Bureaux Members (Group of 15), in collaboration with the Secretariat, to present concrete measures for consideration by both Subcommittees and the Committee.

In 2018, The Group of Bureaux members, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to collect inputs from member States during the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, Legal Subcommittees, and of the Committee. If necessary, invite more views and inputs from member States by disseminating a questionnaire and compiling responses.



Workplan:

- 2019 Consideration of this work under the item entitled “Future role of the Committee” of the committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, on the basis of inputs from the Scientific and technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee at their sessions in 2019. A conference room paper with an outline of concrete proposals for enhancing the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies to be presented. The work of the Legal Subcommittee Working Group on the Status and Application on the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, under the UNISPACE+50 thematic priority 2 will be taken into account.
- 2020 Taking into account views and proposals received in 2018 and 2019, the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Group of Bureau Members, will prepare a revised conference room paper with updates to the outline and concrete proposals for consideration at the Subcommittee sessions in 2020, summarizing the information in action-oriented format. Considerations to continue in the Committee under item “Future role of the Committee”.
- 2021 The Subcommittees, at their respective sessions in 2021, will provide their final inputs and recommendations on the basis of a revised conference room paper. On the basis of those recommendations the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Group of bureau members, will prepare a report in all official languages of the United Nations for action by the Committee in 2021.

Summary of paragraphs from the reports of the Subcommittees and the Committee in the past decade*Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**A/64/20 (2009)*

326. The Committee requested the Group of 15 to consider how to rationalize and optimize the use of the time of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, taking into account the need to balance the value brought by the technical presentations and the need to have adequate time for substantive consideration of the issues before the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

A/65/20 (2010)

314. The Committee recalled that at its fifty-second session, in 2009, it had requested the members of its bureau and the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies to consider how to rationalize and optimize the use of the time of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, taking into account the need to strike a balance between technical presentations, which brought great value, and the substantive consideration of the issues before the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, which required adequate time.

315. The Committee requested the Secretariat, in close consultation with the members of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, to implement measures to rationalize and optimize the use of time of the Committee and its Subcommittees, taking into account the need for maximum flexibility in organizing the work of their sessions in 2011, including the possibility of scheduling symposiums in the second week of a session.

316. To enable the Committee and its Subcommittees to commence their consideration of all the items on their agendas in a timely and balanced manner, the Committee agreed that the possibility of scheduling the item entitled “General exchange of views” over a longer period of time during their sessions should be explored. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should coordinate with

delegations on the rescheduling of statements under that item to a later meeting so as to allow sufficient time for other agenda items to be considered as planned.

317. The Committee agreed that the reports to be submitted by Member States on their national activities in outer space (see A/AC.105/958, para. 19) should comprise a summary of those activities and not exceed three pages.

318. The Committee recommended that open-ended informal consultations be held among interested member States in the margins of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees in 2011, with a view to proposing further measures to rationalize and optimize the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

319. The Committee agreed to continue reviewing its organizational matters at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011.

320. The Committee requested the Secretariat to present to the Legal Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, for their consideration, a detailed proposal to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts. The use of digital recordings should be assessed.

321. The Committee noted the following proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the Subcommittees:

- (a) Clustering of agenda items;
- (b) Having open only one item at a time;
- (c) Making better use of existing tools, such as the daily *Journal* and the indicative schedule of work;
- (d) Uploading statements on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in a timely manner and the introduction of webcasts;
- (e) Limiting the number of interventions by delegations under each agenda item;
- (f) Limiting the length of presentations of information on national activities and projects in statements;
- (g) Beginning meetings promptly as scheduled;
- (h) Reducing the length and quantity of technical presentations, and the establishment of selection criteria.

322. The Committee considered, upon the request of the States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the possibility of introducing new procedural terminology in reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies when reflecting views of that regional group.

323. Some delegations were of the view that the reference to names of regional groups in connection with the summaries of views in reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would support the principle of multilateralism and extend a similar practice adopted in other committees of the General Assembly and organizations of the United Nations system.

324. Some delegations were of the view that the present procedural terminology remained relevant and that it reflected clearly the spirit of consensus in the decision-making of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. Those delegations were of the view that references to names of regional groups in connection with the summaries of views in reports could upset the balance in them by creating the impression that views expressed by a group prevailed over views expressed by individual States.

325. The Committee agreed to include the names of regional groups in the paragraphs listing the speakers under each agenda item in the reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

A/66/20 (2011)

295. The Committee recalled that at its fifty-second session, in 2009, it had requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the members of its bureau and the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies, to consider how to rationalize and optimize the use of the time of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, taking into account the need to strike a balance between technical presentations, which brought great value, and the substantive consideration of the issues before the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, which required adequate time.

296. The Committee endorsed the recommendations made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in paragraphs 216-220 in its report on its forty-eighth session¹ and those made by the Legal Subcommittee in paragraphs 194 and 196-198 of its report on its fiftieth session,² concerning the improvement and optimization of methods of work of those subsidiary bodies.

297. In accordance with the request made by the Committee at its fifty-third session, in 2010, the Committee considered a proposal made by the Secretariat to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282) and agreed that the use of unedited transcripts should be discontinued, starting from its fifty-fifth session, in 2012, in accordance with that proposal.

298. The Committee agreed to apply to the organization of its work the same methods as proposed by the Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees. In that regard, the Committee agreed that:

(a) Maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of items;

(b) As a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes, and scientific and technical presentations should be closely linked to the agenda items of the Committee and should not exceed 15 minutes in duration. The Chair should remind delegations in case of time being exceeded, as appropriate;

(c) Member States and observers of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations, and under which item the presentation is to be made, before the start of the session, in order to optimize the plan of work of the session. A list of presentations should be made available to all delegations on the first day of the session, for possible updating, and should be closed by the adjournment of the last plenary meeting of that day. Speaking notes for such presentations should be provided to facilitate simultaneous interpretation.

299. The Committee agreed to extend the provisions contained in paragraph 325 of the report on its fifty-third session to the Group of 77 and China and other interregional groups.

300. Some delegations were of the view that the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee should be shortened and that the savings in time could be allocated to the sessions of the Committee or the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in particular to the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. Those delegations underlined the unnecessary financial burden to member States due to the low rate of use of available time.

301. Some delegations were of the view that the Legal Subcommittee was the only international forum in which developing countries could engage in a discussion of the legal aspects of outer space activities. Those delegations emphasized that the rationalization and optimization of the time allocated to the Subcommittee should be achieved by including on the agenda substantive items for discussion with the aim of strengthening the international legal framework and that the current duration of the

¹ A/AC.105/987.

² A/AC.105/990.

sessions of the Subcommittee should be maintained so that the legal aspects of outer space activities could continue to be considered.

A/67/20 (2012)

337. The Committee recalled its agreement made at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011, on certain methods to enhance the organization of work of its sessions and the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee,³ and noted with satisfaction that those measures had already been applied successfully in the sessions of the Subcommittees in 2012. In that regard, the Committee stressed the need for maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items in order to optimize the balance between the consideration of agenda items in plenary meetings and work conducted in working groups.

338. Some delegations expressed the view that in order to make sessions more effective, the following measures could be considered: reallocation of time and resources, on an experimental basis, in particular in view of the first results of the measures in the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities; avoiding the simultaneous opening of several agenda items for consideration; merging agenda items; adopting an action-oriented agenda and action-oriented reports; and considering organizational matters earlier in the sessions to allow adequate time for substantive discussions.

339. Some delegations expressed the view that the conference room paper made available at the fifty-first session of the Legal Subcommittee entitled “Organizational matters” (A/AC.105/C.2/2012/CRP.14) should be considered by the Committee at its fifty-sixth session. Those delegations noted that the paper reviewed good practices used by other, comparable United Nations entities with respect to the structure of reports of intergovernmental bodies, and that the substance of the paper should be used as a basis for discussions on the streamlining and organization of work of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

340. Some delegations expressed the view that the current duration of the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee and the Committee should be maintained in order for the Committee to be able to continue to ensure the rule of law in space activities and the progressive development of space law and maintain outer space — a province of humankind — for peaceful uses, and in order to allow sufficient time for the consideration of substantive agenda items, in particular with a view to the consideration of new agenda items by the Legal Subcommittee.

341. Some delegations expressed the view that measures aimed at making the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees more efficient should not affect the flexibility already conferred on the secretariat through the possibility of reopening agenda items for consideration if necessary.

342. Some delegations expressed the view that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should give more importance to substantive issues and avoid commercially oriented technical presentations.

343. The view was expressed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, whose sessions had the greatest number of technical presentations, should consider using the time between meetings for technical presentations, if necessary, in order to allow the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities as much time as possible to advance its work.

A/68/20 (2013)

346. The Committee recalled its agreement made at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011, on certain methods to enhance the organization of work of its sessions and the sessions

³ Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/66/20)*, para. 298.

of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee,⁴ and noted with satisfaction that those measures were already being applied successfully in the sessions of the Subcommittees and the Committee. In that regard, the Committee stressed the need for maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items in order to optimize the balance between the consideration of agenda items in plenary meetings and work conducted in working groups.

347. The Committee had before it a proposal by Greece on matters relating to the membership of the Committee, the composition of the bureaux and the duration of sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees (A/AC.105/2013/CRP.22).

348. Some delegations expressed the view that the organization and methods of work of the Committee and its Subcommittees were a key element in strengthening the functioning and role of those bodies and invited delegations to engage constructively in consultations on proposals to make the work of those bodies more efficient and result oriented.

349. The view was expressed that member States should pay attention to the timely submission of documents to the Secretariat, in order to ensure their translation into the six official languages of the United Nations in time for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees.

350. The view was expressed that all conference room papers should, if possible, be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations.

351. The view was expressed that, in the scheduling of the meetings, precedence should be given to substantive discussions on agenda items in plenary and in working groups, as well as other important matters, instead of technical presentations, in order to make the most efficient use of the interpretation services, and that an assessment should be made regarding the contribution of technical presentations to the work done in the Committee.

A/69/20 (2014)

363. The Committee agreed that it constituted, together with its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee, a unique common platform for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space at the global level, and therefore interaction between the three bodies on the cross-cutting issues before them should be enhanced, as appropriate.

389. The Committee noted that organizational matters and the method of work of the Committee and its Subcommittees had been addressed under other agenda items and would therefore be reflected in other parts of the present report.

390. The Committee stressed the continuous need for maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees in order to optimize the balance between the consideration of agenda items in plenary meetings and work conducted in working groups.

391. The Committee recalled that the trial period for the discontinuation of unedited transcripts would expire in 2015 and that the Committee at its fifty-eighth session and Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-fourth session would evaluate the use of digital recordings (see A/66/20, para. 297, and A/AC.105/C.2/L.282).

392. The Committee noted with satisfaction the work currently being undertaken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to revitalize and improve the website of the Office.

⁴ Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/66/20)*, para. 298.

A/70/20 (2015)

333. The Committee suggested that concrete outcomes of the joint ad hoc meeting [of the First and Fourth Committee of the General Assembly] could include the regular exchange of information between the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and other relevant United Nations entities.

334. The Committee encouraged increased cooperation between the disarmament and civilian space communities in order to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability.

355. The Committee endorsed the agreement of the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1090, para. 235), to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts and to use digital recordings on a permanent basis, on the understanding that the digital recording application should be further enhanced.

356. In accordance with the decision made by the Committee in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 297), and on the basis of the proposal made at its request by the Secretariat to review the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282), the Committee agreed to discontinue their use and to use digital recordings on a permanent basis. It also agreed that the digital recording application should be further enhanced.

357. The Committee endorsed the decision of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-second session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275), to revise the criteria established by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 298), and the agreement by the Subcommittee made at its fiftieth session, in 2013 (A/AC.105/1038, para. 242), in order to secure the time needed for the work of the working groups and to give the Secretariat a clear mandate to implement those criteria. In that regard, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that the same criteria should apply, as appropriate, to the organization of work of the Committee, which, like the Subcommittee, regularly had a high number of scientific and technical presentations.

358. The Committee requested the Secretariat to demonstrate to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-third session, in 2016, any available technical means of assisting delegations in keeping track of the length of statements and presentations.

359. The Committee requested the Secretariat to make available for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees, in 2016, a compendium containing the rules, procedures and practices, including the processing of documentation, of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

A/71/20 (2016)

284. The Committee agreed that it served, together with its two Subcommittees, as a unique common platform for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses and exploration of outer space on a global scale, facilitating rule of law in outer space and capacity-building in space technology and its applications, for the benefit of all nations, in particular developing countries.

317. The Committee welcomed with appreciation the compendium of rules of procedure and methods of work related to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies contained in conference room paper A/AC.105/2016/CRP.5 and prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the request made by the Committee in 2015 (A/70/20, para. 359).

A/72/20 (2017)

314. Some delegations expressed the view that the deliberations on the future role of the Committee should be aimed at strengthening the governance role of the Committee and its Subcommittees, and that issues pertaining to the Committee's method of work should be assessed carefully in order to improve its overall work and output as an intergovernmental platform. The same delegations were of the view that several measures to improve the organization of work of the Committee and its Subcommittees should be adequately addressed and thoroughly considered as part of strengthening the governance role of the Committee as a whole. It was of paramount importance to modernize the method of work of the Committee as an intergovernmental platform in order to strengthen its ability to address future scientific, technological, policy and legal aspects of outer space activities.

315. Some delegations expressed the view that the Committee, as the only guiding body dealing with the promotion of international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of outer space, should carefully study the cross-cutting issues pertaining to the peaceful uses of outer space, including on space security. Current items on the agenda of the two Subcommittees were of a cross-cutting nature, such as those items relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, space debris mitigation and the geostationary orbit, and therefore served as examples of areas in which the two Subcommittees should improve their coordination.

*Scientific and Technical Subcommittee**A/AC.105/958, annex I (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2010, 47th session)*

16. The Working Group of the Whole requested the Secretariat to ensure that at least two hours will be available during each session of the Subcommittee from 2011 to 2013 for holding the workshops to be organized in accordance with the workplan under the item "Use of nuclear power sources in outer space" (see paragraph 10 (c) of annex II to the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-seventh session).

17. The Working Group of the Whole requested the Secretariat to take measures, in close consultation with the Chairman of the Subcommittee, to rationalize and optimize the use of time of the Subcommittee, including on the possible scheduling of the symposium during the second week, as appropriate. To enable the Subcommittee to commence its consideration of all the items of the provisional agenda in a timely and balanced manner, the Working Group agreed that the possibility of scheduling the item entitled "General exchange of views" over a longer period of time during the session, and of limiting the number of slots for statements per meeting, should be explored.

A/AC.105/987 (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2011, 48th session)

214. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation that open-ended informal consultations had been held during its current session pursuant to the recommendation made by the Committee at its fifty-third session, and welcomed the efforts of the Chair of the Subcommittee to further rationalize the working methods of the Subcommittee.

215. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat had taken measures, in close consultation with the Chair of the Subcommittee, to rationalize and optimize the Subcommittee's use of time, including by scheduling the symposium during the second week, by scheduling the item entitled "General exchange of views and introduction of reports on national activities" over a longer period of time during the session and by limiting the number of slots for statements per meeting.

216. The Subcommittee agreed that maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of items, in particular those to be considered by working groups.

217. The Subcommittee noted that an increasing number of reports submitted by Member States on their national activities in outer space comprised a summary of

those activities and did not exceed three pages, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its fifty-third session. The Subcommittee recommended that this practice should continue to be applied and that only reports not exceeding three pages should be included in the official document.

218. The Subcommittee recommended that member States of the Committee should avoid duplicating detailed information provided in their reports on national activities with information provided in statements during the session of the Subcommittee.

219. The Subcommittee recommended that, as a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes and scientific and technical presentations should be closely linked to the agenda items of the Subcommittee and should not exceed 15 minutes in duration.

220. The Subcommittee recommended that member States and observers of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations and under which item, before the start of the session, in order to optimize the plan of work of the session. The Subcommittee also recommended that speaking notes for such presentations should be provided to facilitate the simultaneous interpretation.

221. The Subcommittee recommended that the group composed of the members of the Bureaux of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies (the "Group of 15") should consider matters relating to the optimization of the plan of work of the Subcommittee's sessions, in view of the increasing number of scientific and technical presentations.

A/AC.105/1038 (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2013, 50th session)

242. The Subcommittee agreed that the number of scientific and technical presentations should be limited to a maximum of four presentations per meeting and that member States and permanent observers of the Committee should pay due attention to the need to keep the overall number of presentations in the session at a reasonable level. The Subcommittee also agreed that the Secretariat might, if necessary, and upon consultation with the member State and permanent observer concerned, reduce the number of presentations requested.

A/AC.105/1088 (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2015, 52nd session)

275. The Subcommittee noted with concern that during the present session there had not been enough time for deliberations by the Subcommittee and its working groups to conduct their work with interpretation services. It was noted that during the session, 66 scientific and technical presentations had been delivered. In that connection, the Subcommittee noted the criteria established by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session in 2011 (A/66/20, para. 298) and the agreement by the Subcommittee made at its fiftieth session in 2013 (A/AC.105/1038, para. 242), and considered that it was necessary to revise those criteria in order to secure the necessary time needed for the work of the working groups and to give the Secretariat a clear mandate to implement those criteria. The Subcommittee therefore decided that:

(a) Maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of items;

(b) As a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes;

(c) The number of scientific and technical presentations should be limited to a maximum of three presentations per meeting, presentations should be closely linked to the agenda items of the Subcommittee, and they should not exceed

15 minutes in duration. The Chair should remind delegations if that length of time is exceeded;

(d) Member States and observers of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations and under

which item the presentation is to be made, in advance of the session, in order to optimize the plan of work of the session;

(e) Speaking notes for scientific and technical presentations should be provided to facilitate simultaneous interpretation;

(f) A list of presentations should be made available to all delegations on the first day of the session, in case there are minor amendments to be made to the title, agenda item or presenter of the presentations listed, and that list should be closed by the adjournment of the last plenary meeting of that day. The Secretariat should not allow additional requests for presentations after that day.

276. The Subcommittee recommended that the same criteria should apply, as appropriate, to the organization of work of the Committee, which regularly also had a high number of scientific and technical presentations.

277. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to report to the Committee at its fifty-eighth session on the modalities of organizing the time of plenary meetings in order to allow working groups to meet before the delivery of scientific and technical presentations, and to report on any available technical means of assisting delegations in keeping track of the timing of statements and presentations.

278. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to make available for the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees in 2016 a compendium containing the rules, procedures and practices, including the processing of documentation, of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

279. Some delegations expressed the view that the scheduling of scientific and technical presentations outside plenary meetings should be considered.

280. The view was expressed that multiple statements should not be delivered by the same delegation under the same agenda item.

281. Some delegations expressed the view that while general statements could be limited to one statement per delegation, delegations had the right to make as many interventions under any agenda item, as necessary.

282. The view was expressed that consideration of legal aspects of space activities should be undertaken during the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee, in order to allow enough time for consideration of technical aspects by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

A/AC.105/1109 (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2016, 53rd session)

266. The Subcommittee welcomed with appreciation the compendium of rules of procedures and methods of work related to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, contained in conference room paper A/AC.105/C.1/2016/CRP.5, prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the request by the Subcommittee and the Committee in 2015.

A/AC.105/1138 (Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 2017, 54th session)

292. The Subcommittee recalled the agreement reached at its fifty-second session, in 2015 (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275), and considered that it was necessary to add further measures related to the management of scientific and technical presentations. The Subcommittee therefore decided that: (a) States members and observers of the Committee should communicate to the Secretariat no later than one week before each session of the Subcommittee their wish to make scientific and technical presentations; and (b) the Secretariat would take the necessary decisions in the scheduling of presentations in the interest of the smooth running of the sessions.

*Legal Subcommittee**A/AC.105/990 (Legal Subcommittee, 2011, 50th session)*

176. Some delegations expressed the view that the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee should be shortened. Those delegations proposed that the savings in time could be allocated to the sessions of the Committee or the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in particular its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

177. Some delegations expressed the view that the Legal Subcommittee was the only international forum in which developing countries could engage in a discussion of the legal aspects of outer space activities. Those delegations were of the view that the rationalization and optimization of the time allocated to the Subcommittee should be done by including on the agenda substantive items for discussion with the aim of strengthening the international legal framework and that the sessions of the Subcommittee should be kept at their current length so that the legal aspects of outer space activities could continue to be considered.

178. The Subcommittee noted with satisfaction the clarifications made by the Conference Management Service and the Financial Resources Management Service related to the organization of sessions and the administration of documentation for the Subcommittee.

179. Some delegations expressed the view that, according to the data recorded by the Conference Management Service at the United Nations Office at Vienna, the actual average duration of the first 14 plenary meetings of the Subcommittee at its current session had been 1 hour and 20 minutes. Thus, only 7 meetings would have been required, instead of the 14 meetings scheduled, and three full session days could have been saved. The necessity of sending experts to Vienna for meetings in which only 45 per cent of the available time was actually used therefore represented a heavy financial burden on member States, in particular developing countries.

180. Some delegations expressed the view that the time allocated to the plenary was not fully utilized in view of the lack of substantive issues on its agenda and that the role of the Subcommittee should be strengthened in order to demonstrate the operational relevance and importance of the Subcommittee. Those delegations were of the view that the issue of substance was political, in view of the lack of consensus in developing space law.

181. Some delegations expressed the view that the work of the Legal Subcommittee should be closely coordinated with the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as well as the work of intergovernmental bodies other than the Committee. Those delegations were of the view that the sessions of the two subcommittees could be organized consecutively, with one or two days of joint meetings so that greater benefits could be derived from the participation of experts from both subcommittees.

182. Some delegations expressed the view that the reallocation of meeting time from the Legal Subcommittee to the Committee was possible, with the understanding that that time could be reallocated back to the Subcommittee, when necessary.

183. The view was expressed that the nature of the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee was different from those of the Committee, as the issues discussed at the Subcommittee level required extensive technical consideration by experts, and that therefore the current duration of its sessions should be kept. The delegation that expressed that view was also of the view that the Committee remained the platform for the exchange of views on broad political matters and thus the duration of its sessions could be decreased to five days in order to allow both subcommittees to have more time for consideration of their agenda items.

184. The view was expressed that, as substantial progress had not been made on certain issues, some items could be included on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee every two years.

185. Some delegations expressed the view that meetings of the working groups of the Legal Subcommittee could be held in parallel with the plenary meetings.

186. Other delegations expressed the view that the parallel organization of meetings would not allow simultaneous interpretation, which was fundamental to the discussion of technical issues, and could also preclude small delegations from full representation at all meetings.

187. Some delegations were of the view that items on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee should be streamlined in order to improve the effectiveness of discussions and allow the cost-effective participation of delegations in the work of the Subcommittee.

188. Some delegations expressed the view that the work of the Subcommittee must be optimized, streamlined and rationalized and that the efficiency of that work and working discipline should be enhanced.

189. The view was expressed that, in the scheduling of work, it was important to maintain a certain concentration of interest and avoid any fractionalization in the consideration of agenda items.

190. Some delegations were of the view that sessions of the Subcommittee could be broadcast via the World Wide Web and that the Secretariat could explore the financial implications of webcasting.

191. Some delegations were of the view that the contents and length of Subcommittee reports could be optimized by avoiding the repetitive reflection of views and making them more streamlined and action-oriented.

192. The view was expressed that in optimizing the report of the Legal Subcommittee, the content and length of the report should not be substantially reduced, as it was important for the views of member States to be duly reflected and that would be conducive to delegates attending future sessions.

193. Some delegations expressed the view that the agenda item on proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee did not allow sufficient room for the consideration of organizational matters and proposed that the title "Other matters" should be used, in line with the practice of the Committee.

194. The Subcommittee agreed that maximum flexibility should be applied in the scheduling of agenda items, in particular those under which working groups would be convened.

195. The Subcommittee agreed that informal consultations should be held among interested delegations on the margins of the fifty-fourth session of the Committee to continue the discussions on organizational matters.

196. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to prepare for its fifty-first session a conference room paper containing information on good practices used by other comparable United Nations entities on the structure of reports of intergovernmental bodies and agreed that the bulletin of the Director-General and Executive Director on standards for the preparation and submission of manuscripts of United Nations documents and publications dated 4 March 2010 (UNOV/DGB.22-UNODC/EDB.22) should be attached to that paper for further study.

197. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to prepare for its fifty-first session, in 2012, a conference room paper in which it examined the financial and other implications of webcasting the sessions of the Subcommittee.

198. In accordance with the request made by the Committee at its fifty-third session, in 2010, the Subcommittee considered a proposal made by the Secretariat to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282) and recommended that the use of unedited transcripts should be discontinued, starting from its fifty-first session, in 2012, in accordance with that proposal.

A/AC.105/1003 (Legal Subcommittee, 2012, 51st session)

195. The Subcommittee had before it the following:

- (a) A conference room paper entitled “Organizational matters” (A/AC.105/C.2/2012/CRP.14);
- (b) A conference room paper entitled “Review of the financial and other implications of webcasting the sessions of the Subcommittee” (A/AC.105/C.2/2012/CRP.15).

196. Some delegations emphasized the need to rationalize and further improve the efficiency of the work of the Legal Subcommittee. Those delegations stressed in particular the need for the Legal Subcommittee to keep working on the methods of work and on the allocation of its resources. In that respect, those delegations proposed the consideration of the possibility of, as an experiment, reallocating meetings of the Legal Subcommittee to the session of the Committee, on a temporary basis, for 2013 and 2014, in view of the work to be undertaken in the coming years by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, which would also involve the Committee. The reallocation of meeting time from the Legal Subcommittee to the Committee could therefore be done with the understanding that the time could be allocated back to the Legal Subcommittee, when necessary.

197. Some delegations expressed the view that the reallocation of meetings of the Legal Subcommittee would undermine the ability of the Subcommittee to continue to guarantee the rule of law in space activities, ensure the progressive development of space law and maintain the peaceful uses of outer space as a province of humankind. Those delegations also noted that the Subcommittee continued to receive proposals for new agenda items every year and that its work was cyclical by nature.

198. Some delegations expressed the view that, regarding the scheduling of work, the simultaneous opening of several agenda items for consideration was neither an effective practice nor one that was followed by other bodies. Those delegations expressed the view that the practice should be discontinued.

199. The view was expressed that agenda items that were not action-oriented and not expected to lead to specific decisions by the Subcommittee should be absorbed under other related agenda items.

200. Some delegations expressed the view that the reports of the Subcommittee should be made more action-oriented and focused on decisions made by the Subcommittee, following the example of other bodies, as mentioned in A/AC.105/C.2/2012/CRP.14, which would result in significant savings in the budget of the United Nations. Those delegations expressed concern about the underutilization of conference services, as the time at the disposal of the Subcommittee during the first week of its session had not been fully utilized.

201. Some delegations expressed the view that the substance of the conference room paper entitled “Organizational matters”, which reviewed good practices used by other comparable United Nations entities with respect to the structure of reports of intergovernmental bodies, should be used as a basis for discussions on the organization of work of both the Committee and its Subcommittees.

202. Some delegations expressed the view that items on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee should be streamlined and rationalized in order to improve the effectiveness of discussions and allow the cost-effective participation of delegations in the work of the Subcommittee and that the efficiency of that work and working discipline should be enhanced.

203. Some delegations expressed the view that the current working methods of the Subcommittee should not be discarded before the Subcommittee had considered and reached agreement on specific proposals on alternative methods and before it was able to provide the Secretariat with clear guidance on how its work should be organized and reported on.

204. Some delegations expressed the view that any changes designed to optimize the working methods of the Subcommittees would need to be considered and agreed upon by the Committee. Those delegations stressed that, within the framework of those changes, consideration should be given to the excessive amount of time dedicated during the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to technical presentations, to the detriment of consideration of its substantive items.

205. Some delegations expressed the view that proposals relating to the organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee, including the restructuring of its report, should be submitted in writing to facilitate the consideration of those matters.

206. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to advance the consideration by the Subcommittee of its agenda item on proposals to the Committee on new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its next session, in order to allow adequate time for substantive discussions on organizational matters.

207. The Subcommittee agreed to continue applying maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items, in particular those under which working groups would be convened.

208. The view was expressed that sessions of the Subcommittee could be broadcast via the World Wide Web, as that practice would be both cost-effective and in line with the growing interest in webcasting meetings.

209. Some delegations expressed the view that, in the light of the information provided in the conference room paper on the financial and other implications of webcasting the sessions of the Subcommittee, it was not feasible from a legal, budgetary and practical standpoint to introduce webcasting of the sessions of the Subcommittee at the present time.

210. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the demonstration made by the Conference Management Service and the Financial Resources Management Service related to the new website for digital recordings to be established in accordance with the decision made by the Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011, to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282), starting with their respective sessions in 2012.

A/AC.105/1045 (Legal Subcommittee, 2013, 52nd session)

195. Some delegations expressed the view that in order to optimize the efficiency of the Legal Subcommittee, the duration of its sessions should be shortened from two weeks to one week. Those delegations emphasized that such a change would not affect the quality or outcome of deliberations in the Subcommittee.

196. Some delegations expressed the view that the shortening of the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee would undermine its ability to continue to guarantee the rule of law in space activities, ensure the progressive development of space law and maintain outer space as a province of humankind for peaceful uses. Those delegations also noted that the Subcommittee received proposals for new agenda items every year and that adequate time was required for their consideration.

197. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees and to further the understanding and application of existing legal instruments relating to space law.

198. Some delegations expressed the view that items on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee should be streamlined and rationalized in order to improve the effectiveness of discussions and allow the cost-effective participation of delegations in the work of the Subcommittee, and that the efficiency and discipline involved in that work should be enhanced.

199. The Subcommittee agreed to continue applying maximum flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items, in particular those under which working groups would be convened.

200. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the demonstration by the Conference Management Service on the enhanced website for digital recordings, established in accordance with the decision made by the Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011 (A/AC.105/C.2/L.282).

A/AC.105/1067 (Legal Subcommittee, 2014, 53rd session)

203. The Subcommittee noted the proposal by Germany for the renewal of the structure of the agenda and organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee, as contained in documents A/AC.105/C.2/L.293 and Rev.1, and subsequently in document A/AC.105/C.2/2014/CRP.30.

204. Some delegations expressed the view that the role of the Legal Subcommittee as the principal international forum to promote and further develop space law should be maintained and enhanced.

205. Some delegations expressed the view that the proposal by Germany constituted a timely and constructive effort to simplify the structure of the Subcommittee's agenda and to make more efficient use of the sessions of the Subcommittee.

206. Some delegations expressed the view that the structure of the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee should remain unchanged.

207. Some delegations expressed the view that while the intention of the proposal by Germany was welcome, some elements of the proposal needed further clarification and elaboration before the new structure contained in the proposal could possibly be considered for further deliberations.

208. The view was expressed that the proposal by Germany should be seen as one suggestion for improving the organization and method of work of the Subcommittee, and that other options should also be explored.

209. In the discussion under the agenda item Germany was invited to continue carrying out open-ended consultations, making use of the opportunities provided by the sessions of the Committee in 2014 and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2015 in order to further elaborate on its proposal contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/2014/CRP.30 with a view to reaching a consensus on the proposal.

210. The view was expressed that issues relating to the effectiveness of the Subcommittee's work also related to the political will to address issues directly related to the matters dealt with by the Subcommittee.

211. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee

and its Subcommittees and to further the understanding and application of existing legal instruments relating to space law.

212. Some delegations expressed the view that the Committee should establish rules of procedure, including reviewing its current practice of making decisions through consensus, and that, in that regard, the Secretariat should consult member States on the matter.

213. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the demonstration by the Conference Management Service of the “VIC Online Services” portal, a new web-based application allowing meeting participants convenient access to documentation, meeting schedules and information about facilities and services available in the Vienna International Centre.

A/AC.105/1090 (Legal Subcommittee, 2015, 54th session)

226. The Subcommittee had before it the revised proposal by Germany for the renewal of the structure of the agenda and organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee, as contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.293/Rev.2.

227. Some delegations reiterated the view that the proposal by Germany constituted a timely and constructive effort to simplify the structure of the Subcommittee’s agenda and to make more efficient use of the sessions of the Subcommittee.

228. Some delegations reiterated the view that, while the intention of the proposal by Germany was welcome, in particular on the restructuring of the schedule of work of the Subcommittee, some elements of the proposal needed further clarification and elaboration, including on the proposed new structure, with preparatory groups and working groups.

229. The view was expressed that the German delegation should further elaborate on the consensual aspects of the proposal, namely the restructuring of the agenda, and withdraw from the text the other aspects of the proposal, in particular those related to the role and organizational aspects of the working groups and their preparatory groups.

230. In the discussion under the agenda item, Germany was invited to continue carrying out open-ended consultations in the intersessional period in order to further elaborate on its proposal contained in A/AC.105/C.2/L.293/Rev.2, with a view to presenting to the Subcommittee a revised document taking into account comments by member States.

231. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees and to further the understanding and application of existing legal instruments relating to space law.

232. The view was expressed that the Committee should establish rules of procedure, as well as review its current practice of making decisions by consensus, and that the Secretariat should consult member States on the matter.

233. The Subcommittee considered the note by the past, present and incoming Chairs of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space entitled “2018 ‘UNISPACE+50’ theme of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Legal Subcommittee and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space”, contained in A/AC.105/C.2/2015/CRP.10.

234. The Subcommittee agreed to the main proposal put forward in that conference room paper and requested the Secretariat, in close consultation with the past, present and incoming Chairs of the Committee, to develop their proposal in further detail and to present it in the six official languages of the United Nations for consideration by

the Committee at its fifty-eighth session, in June 2015, taking into account the recommendations made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-second session (A/AC.105/1088, annex I, para. 4).

235. In accordance with the decision made by the Legal Subcommittee in 2011 (A/AC.105/990, para. 198), and on the basis of the proposal made by the Secretariat to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts (see A/AC.105/C.2/L.282), the Subcommittee agreed to use digital recordings on a permanent basis, and agreed that the digital recording application should be further enhanced.

A/AC.105/1113 (Legal Subcommittee, 2016, 55th session)

254. Some delegations recalled the proposal by Germany for the renewal of the structure of the agenda and the organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee, as contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.293/Rev.2, and emphasized that the discussion on the future role of the Subcommittee as the prime international body for space law-making was important.

255. Some delegations expressed the view that the role of the Subcommittee as the principal international forum to promote and further develop space law should be maintained and enhanced.

256. Some delegations expressed the view that the Subcommittee should begin to consider forming a list of issues related to the legal aspects of space activities. In doing so, the Subcommittee could help to define its future directions and optimize its work.

257. Some delegations expressed the view that the Subcommittee could consider various aspects relating to the development and implementation of binding international norms and standards applicable to space activities.

258. The view was expressed that the current legal framework established by the United Nations treaties on outer space adequately met the needs of the international community in matters relating to outer space, and that the legal framework governing global space activities would be strengthened through increased participation in and adherence to the existing United Nations treaties and principles on outer space.

259. The Subcommittee urged States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space, in particular those that are members of the Committee, to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties in accordance with their national law and incorporating them into their national legislation.

260. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees and to further the understanding and application of existing legal instruments relating to space law.

261. The view was expressed that the Subcommittee, through an item on its agenda, could promote knowledge and understanding of the fact that the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee constituted a unique common platform for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space at the global level, and were the only United Nations bodies to which the General Assembly had assigned the exclusive responsibility to work on all issues, including legal issues, pertaining to outer space.

262. The Subcommittee welcomed with appreciation the compendium of rules of procedure and methods of work related to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, contained in conference room paper A/AC.105/C.2/2016/CRP.5 and prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the request made by the Subcommittee and the Committee in 2015.

A/AC.105/1122 (Legal Subcommittee, 2017, 56th session)

275. The Subcommittee agreed that IISL and ECSL should once again be invited to organize a symposium, to be held during the Subcommittee's fifty-seventh session, taking into account the need for equitable geographical and gender representation in the symposium in order to reflect a broader range of opinions. The Subcommittee urged IISL and ECSL to cooperate with other interested academic entities for that purpose.
