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Governance and method of work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At its sixtieth session, in 2017, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space requested that the Secretariat prepare a conference room paper containing a proposed workplan on how to improve overall governance and the method of work of the Committee as a whole. In response to that request, the Secretariat reviewed the reports on the sessions of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee in the past decade, and drafted a proposed workplan for the period 2019–2021, contained in a conference room paper (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.13), aimed at reaching a decision on a set of concrete and detailed proposals, to be considered by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session, in 2021.

2. Following the recommendation made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee at their respective sessions in 2018 (A/AC.105/1167, annex I, paras. 16 and 17, and A/AC.105/1177, annex I, para. 9), the Committee, at its sixty-first session, also in 2018, agreed to the following multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. The Committee decided, in that regard, that the work under the multi-year workplan would be conducted under the existing item of the Committee entitled “Future role of the Committee” (A/73/20, para. 382).

Multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

2018 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to prepare a document in all the official languages of the United Nations, in advance of the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 2019, containing a categorization of the range of organizational measures raised by delegations in sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies over the past decade and an outline of additional topics for consideration on organizational matters and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies



- 2019 Consideration of the document at the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, and of the Committee, under its agenda item entitled “Future role of the Committee”, which might be introduced as an agenda item for both subcommittees, as appropriate. The work of the Working Group on the Status and Application on the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space of the Legal Subcommittee, under the multi-year workplan on thematic priority 2 of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50), will be taken into account
- 2020 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to present a revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations, taking into account the outcome of the considerations undertaken in 2019, containing concrete, action-oriented proposals for consideration by the two subcommittees and the Committee
- 2021 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, is to present a second revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations for final input by the two subcommittees. The document is to be updated in all the official languages of the United Nations, for action by the Committee

3. In accordance with the workplan, in response to the request for the preparation of a document containing a categorization of the range of organizational measures, the Secretariat prepared a note on the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies ([A/AC.105/C.1/L.377](#)) containing previous suggestions and considerations, grouped into the following categories: statements and presentations; organization of work; and synergies and cooperation. Under each category, the measures were further divided into two subcategories, namely, measures already implemented and proposals for further consideration. A matrix summarizing the organizational measures was provided in the annex to the note.

4. The note by the Secretariat was made available to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, the Legal Subcommittee and the Committee at their respective sessions in 2019, and the work undertaken in 2019 under the multi-year workplan is reflected in the reports on those sessions ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I and appendix, [A/AC.105/1203](#), paras. 272–277, and [A/74/20](#), paras. 318–323).

5. At its sixty-second session, in 2019, the Committee was informed that some delegations would establish an informal consultative group to which representatives of all interested member States would be invited to informally discuss administrative measures relating to the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies ([A/74/20](#), para. 322).

6. The present document contains updates to the note by the Secretariat, taking into account the outcome of the discussions held in 2019. It has been prepared jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members and includes concrete, action-oriented proposals for consideration by the two subcommittees and the Committee in 2020.

II. Organizational measures on which consensus has been reached

1. Records of the Committee and subcommittees

7. The use of unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records was introduced by the Committee at its thirty-ninth session, in 1996, and by the Legal Subcommittee at

its thirty-sixth session, in 1997.¹ At its fortieth session, in 1997, the Committee agreed, on the basis of a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled “Utilization of unedited verbatim transcripts”, to continue the use of those transcripts in lieu of verbatim records and to further review its requirements for those transcripts at its forty-first session, in 1998 (A/52/20, paras. 167–170).

8. At its fifty-third session, in 2010, the Committee requested that the Secretariat present to the Legal Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and to the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, for their consideration, a detailed proposal to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts, noting that the use of digital recordings should be assessed (A/65/20, para. 320).

9. In 2011, the Committee considered a proposal made at its request 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 (A/66/20, para. 297). In line with the proposal, the use of unedited transcripts was discontinued temporarily for the period 2012–2015, for review by the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-fourth session and by the Committee at its fifty-eighth session, both in 2015.

10. At their sessions in 2015, both the Legal Subcommittee and the Committee agreed to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts and to use digital recordings on a permanent basis, and that the digital recording application should be further enhanced (A/AC.105/1090, para. 235, and A/70/20, paras. 355–356).

11. At its sixty-first session, the Committee agreed that digital recordings should also be used for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, starting at its fifty-sixth session, in 2019 (A/73/20, para. 383).

12. The digital recording application could be further enhanced if audio files are supplemented by text files, as the availability of information in various digital formats could facilitate consultations and the sharing of information, thereby contributing to the efficiency of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

13. At its fifty-eighth session, in 2019, the Legal Subcommittee, in its consideration of the governance and method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, noted that there was agreement about recommending to the Committee that statements by delegations be uploaded, on a voluntary basis, to the page dedicated to the session on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1203, para. 274).

14. At its sixty-second session, the Committee requested that the Secretariat upload statements that had been voluntarily submitted by States for uploading to the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs in a timely manner during all sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees, starting in 2020. Upon submitting statements for interpretation purposes, delegations are to inform the Secretariat whether the statement may be uploaded (A/74/20, para. 321 (a)).

2. Time management

15. At its fifty-fourth session, in 2011, the Committee agreed that the Chair should remind delegations if the length of time allocated to statements and presentations was exceeded, as appropriate (A/66/20, para. 298 (b)).

16. At its fifty-second session, in 2015, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee requested that the Secretariat report to the Committee at its fifty-eighth session on

¹ See the report of the Secretariat on records of the Committee (A/AC.105/L.207) and General Assembly resolutions 48/222 B, 49/221 B, 50/27, 50/206 B and 51/123. In accordance with Assembly resolution 51/211 B, the Chair of the Committee on Conferences, in his letter of 1 April 1997, invited all intergovernmental bodies entitled to written meeting records to consider the possibility of requesting the Secretariat to issue unedited transcripts of one meeting for comparison purposes, with a view to the possible substitution of such transcripts for their usual records in the future.

any available technical means of assisting delegations in keeping track of the timing of statements and presentations ([A/AC.105/1088](#), para. 277).

17. At its fifty-eighth session, in 2015, the Committee requested that the Secretariat 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 ([A/70/20](#), para. 358).

18. At the sixty-second session of the Committee, the Secretariat provided, on a trial basis, a timekeeping device for assisting delegations in keeping track of the length of statements and presentations. At that session, the Committee agreed that the timekeeping device should be used in all sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees, starting in 2020 ([A/74/20](#), para. 321 (c)).

3. Statements

19. At its session in 2010, the Committee took note of various proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the subcommittees, such as limiting the number of interventions by delegations under each agenda item ([A/65/20](#), para. 321).

20. At its session in 2011, the Committee agreed that, as a general rule, statements should not exceed 10 minutes and that the Chair should remind delegations if that length of time was exceeded, as appropriate ([A/66/20](#), para. 298 (b)).

21. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals relating to document management ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix), such as: (a) to reduce the time allotted for statements to 7 minutes for member States, 5 minutes for observer States and organizations, and 10 minutes for regional groups under the item on the general exchange of views; and (b) to upload statements on a voluntary basis to the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat in a timely manner.

22. At its session in 2019, the Committee agreed that statements by delegations should continue to be limited to 10 minutes, that the Chair of each respective session should remind delegations when 1 minute remained and that the Chair should interrupt the delivery of the statement when 10 minutes had elapsed ([A/74/20](#), para. 321 (b)).

4. Technical presentations

23. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee agreed that scientific and technical presentations should be closely linked to the agenda items of the Committee and should not exceed 15 minutes in duration ([A/66/20](#), para. 298 (b)).

24. The Committee also agreed that member States and observers should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations, and under which item the presentation was 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 (*ibid.*, para. 298 (c)).

25. At its fiftieth session, in 2013, the Scientific and Technical 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 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 or permanent observer concerned, reduce the number of presentations requested ([A/AC.105/1038](#), para. 242).

26. At its fifty-second session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee decided that: (a) 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 should not exceed 15 minutes in duration, and the Chair should remind delegations if that length of time was exceeded; (b) member States and observers should communicate to the Secretariat their wish to make scientific and technical presentations and under which item the presentation was to be made, in advance of the session, in order to optimize the plan of work of the session; (c) speaking notes for scientific and technical presentations should be provided to facilitate simultaneous interpretation; and (d) a list of presentations should be made available to all delegations on the first day of the session, in case there were minor amendments to be made to the title, agenda item or presenter of the presentations listed, that list should be closed by the adjournment of the last plenary meeting of that day, and the Secretariat should not allow additional requests for presentations after that day. The Subcommittee recommended that the same criteria apply, as appropriate, to the organization of work of the Committee, which regularly also had a high number of scientific and technical presentations (A/AC.105/1088, para. 275–276).

27. At its fifty-fourth session, in 2017, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee recalled the agreement reached at its fifty-second session and decided that: (a) member States and observers 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 (A/AC.105/1138, para. 292).

28. At its session in 2019, the Committee agreed that the timekeeping device should be used for the delivery of presentations, that the Chair of each respective session should remind delegations when 1 minute remained and that the Chair should interrupt the delivery of the presentation when 15 minutes had elapsed (A/74/20, para. 321 (c)).

5. Document management

29. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals relating to document management, including: (a) to provide delegations with the opportunity to opt out of receiving paper copies of pre-session documents for sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies; (b) not to distribute paper copies of documents by default, but to provide delegations with the opportunity to opt in to receiving documents in hard copy; (c) to distribute documents only to member States and organizations with permanent observer status with the Committee; (d) to upload documents distributed in session to the website at the time of their physical distribution; and (e) to indicate on documents the date of their publication on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1202, annex I, appendix).

30. At its session in 2019, the Committee requested that the Secretariat inform member States of the procedure for voluntary opting out of receiving paper copies of pre-session documents (A/74/20, para. 321 (d)).

6. Organization of work

31. The Committee has agreed to apply to the organization of its work the same methods as those proposed by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. In that regard, the Committee and the subcommittees have stressed the need for maximum flexibility in the scheduling of items, in particular those to be considered by the working groups (A/66/20, para. 298, A/68/20, para. 346, A/69/20, para. 390, A/AC.105/987, para. 216, A/AC.105/1088, para. 275,

[A/AC.105/990](#), para. 194, [A/AC.105/1003](#), para. 207, and [A/AC.105/1045](#), para. 199).

32. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals on the organization of work, such as: (a) to start addressing decision items earlier in the session; (b) to deal with agenda items in order; (c) to examine one item per meeting; (d) to cluster agenda items; (e) to maintain a balance between predictability and flexibility in the scheduling of agenda items; (f) to continue to apply maximum flexibility in the scheduling of items; (g) to make sure that decision items are clearly indicated in the provisional agenda and that reference is made to previous pertinent decisions by the Committee and the General Assembly; (h) to include the schedule of the working group meetings in the indicative schedule of work annexed to the annotated provisional agenda; (i) to provide the schedule of meetings well before the sessions, including the schedule of meetings of working groups; (j) to include the schedule of meetings of working groups in the annotated provisional agenda, and (k) to take into account the needs and special requirements of small delegations ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix).

33. At its session in 2019, the Committee requested that the Secretariat publish the schedule of working group meetings, technical presentations and side events in advance of the respective sessions on the pages of the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs dedicated to the sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees, and that it provide invitation letters, together with the indicative schedule of work, well in advance of the sessions in order to allow sufficient time for the processing of government authorizations for delegations ([A/74/20](#), para. 321 (e) and (g)).

7. Compendium of rules of procedure and methods of work related to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

34. At their sessions in 2016, the Committee and its subcommittees 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](#)) prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with the request made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Committee in 2015 ([A/AC.105/1109](#), para. 266, [A/AC.105/1113](#), para. 262, and [A/71/20](#), para. 317).

35. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard a proposal to provide practical information on how to follow the work of existing working groups, in particular for the benefit of new member States ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix).

36. At its session in 2019, the Committee requested that the Secretariat prepare guidance to be made available on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs containing practical information on how to follow the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, as well as information on procedures on applications for membership and observer status with the Committee ([A/74/20](#), para. 321 (f)).

8. Synergies and interaction between the Committee, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee

37. Over the years, at the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, some delegations have expressed the view that there should be increased synergy and cooperation between the two bodies, in order to further enhance consistency in the work of the Committee and its subcommittees ([A/AC.105/1045](#), para. 197, [A/AC.105/1067](#), para. 211, [A/AC.105/1090](#), para. 231, and [A/AC.105/1113](#), para. 260).

38. At the fiftieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, in 2011, some delegations expressed the view that the work of the subcommittees should be closely coordinated, including by organizing sessions consecutively, with the possibility of holding joint

sessions on some days, to derive greater benefits from the participation of experts from both subcommittees (A/AC.105/990, para. 181).

39. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals on that matter (A/AC.105/1202, annex I, appendix), such as: (a) to enhance interaction and cooperation between the Committee, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, especially with regard to cross-cutting matters; (b) to introduce measures within the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in order to enhance cooperation with the Legal Subcommittee; (c) to include an item devoted to the work of the Legal Subcommittee in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and vice versa, to allow for discussion of cross-cutting issues; (d) to organize joint sessions or meetings of both subcommittees; and (e) to establish working groups of the Committee and give them a mandate to meet during sessions of the subcommittees.

40. At its sixty-first session, the Committee agreed to the multi-year workplan on the governance and method of work, under which it was provided that consideration of the document on governance and method of work would be carried out at the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, and of the Committee, under its agenda item entitled “Future role of the Committee”, which might be introduced as an agenda item for both subcommittees, as appropriate.

41. At its session in 2019, the Committee agreed to introduce a regular agenda item entitled “Future role and methods of work of the Committee” on the agendas of both subcommittees to allow for discussion of cross-cutting issues. The wording of the existing agenda item of the Committee (“Future role of the Committee”) was to be amended accordingly to read “Future role and method of work of the Committee” (A/74/20, para. 321 (h)).

III. Organizational measures on which discussion is ongoing²

1. Technical presentations and working group meetings

42. A session of the Committee consists of 16 meetings, while subcommittee sessions are longer and normally consist of 20 meetings. The standard duration of a meeting, during which interpretation is provided, is three hours: from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., for plenary meetings of the Committee and the subcommittees, as well as for formal meetings of working groups. In general, technical presentations are scheduled for the last hour of each plenary meeting, except for the first day and the last day of sessions.

43. There are currently 92 States members and 41 permanent observers of the Committee. At its sixty-second session, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session that three more States become members of the Committee, and that one organization be granted, on a provisional basis, permanent observer status.

44. If the last hour of each plenary meeting throughout an entire session of a subcommittee (except for the first day and the last day of the session) was allocated to technical presentations, the number of slots for presentations (64) would still be less than half the number of member States and permanent observers (137).

45. In 2019, there were 62 technical presentations and 16 formal meetings of working groups during the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 16 presentations and 14 meetings of working groups during the session of the Legal Subcommittee and 44 presentations and 4 meetings of working groups during the session of the Committee.

² The list is not exhaustive and should not be regarded as final. It is subject to modifications, including the addition of new proposals, by States members of the Committee.

46. In 2020, the following working groups will be convened:

(a) During the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee: Working Group of the Whole, Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, Working Group on Space and Global Health and Working Group on the “Space2030” Agenda;

(b) During the session of the Legal Subcommittee: Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space, Working Group on Matters Relating to the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space and Working Group on the “Space2030” Agenda;

(c) During the session of the Committee: Working Group on the “Space2030” Agenda.

47. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals relating to presentations and organization of work ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix), including:

(a) To hold presentations during lunchtime to allow more time for deliberations of the Committee and its subcommittees and their working groups;

(b) To hold presentations during plenary meetings to ensure that interpretation is provided;

(c) to limit the number of technical presentations per delegation;

(d) To limit the number of technical presentations per permanent observer;

(e) To limit the number of technical presentations per meeting;

(f) To allow only those presentations that are closely linked to the agenda items;

(g) To reduce the length and quantity of technical presentations;

(h) To establish selection criteria for presentations;

(i) To finalize the schedule of technical presentations before the session;

(j) To cluster presentations by topic;

(k) To allow presentations to be delivered only after 5 p.m. and limit the number to five presentations per day;

(l) To request presenters to provide abstracts;

(m) To implement electronic forms for the submission of requests for presentations;

(n) To allocate more time to the meetings of working groups;

(o) To review and evaluate the mandates of working groups every five years;

(p) To allow working groups to meet before technical presentations are given at each meeting.

2. Webcasting

48. At its session in 2010, the Committee took note of various proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the subcommittees, such as the introduction of webcasts ([A/65/20](#), para. 321 (d)).

49. At the fiftieth session of the Legal Subcommittee, some delegations expressed 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. The Subcommittee requested that the Secretariat 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 ([A/AC.105/990](#), paras. 190 and 197).

50. A webcast is a live video and audio broadcast of an event, transmitted over the Internet. For a webcast, the data transmission is single-sided. Therefore, interaction between the presenters and the audience is not possible. A webinar, by contrast, is interactive and allows for the two-way transmission of information between the meeting and the online audience.

51. At its fifty-first session, the Legal Subcommittee had before it 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](#)). 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. Some delegations stated that, in the light of the information provided in the conference room paper, it was not feasible from a legal, budgetary and practical standpoint to introduce webcasting of the sessions of the Subcommittee at that time.

52. Following consultation with the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the Secretariat reported to the Committee at its sixty-second session that webcasting of the sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees would have financial implications and that the matter could be further explored upon request by the Committee.

3. Decision-making

53. As presented in the note by the Secretariat on a compendium of rules of procedure and methods of work related to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies ([A/AC.105/2016/CRP.5](#)), the Committee decided at its first session, in 1962, to follow the agreement stated by the Chair at the second meeting of that session, namely, that it had been agreed among the members of the Committee that it would be the aim of all members of the Committee and its subcommittees to conduct the Committee’s work in such a way that the Committee would be able to reach agreement in its work without need for voting ([A/5181](#), para. 4).

54. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals on decision-making ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix), namely:

- (a) To maintain consensus-based decision-making;
- (b) To consider the possibility of voting on procedural matters such as those on which no consensus can be reached, and which are forwarded for consideration to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly;
- (c) To consider alternative ways of advancing decision-making on matters such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph.

4. Interaction with non-governmental entities, in particular those from industry and the private sector

55. In its resolution [73/6](#) entitled “Fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: space as a driver of sustainable development”, the General Assembly acknowledged the importance of global partnership and strengthened cooperation among Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, industry and private sector entities in fulfilling the “Space2030” agenda and its implementation plan.

56. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals on engagement with non-governmental entities ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix), namely:

(a) Not to hold dialogues with non-governmental entities during the sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees and to hold such dialogues only in the intersessional periods and within existing resources;

(b) To find new ways to better engage with non-governmental entities in view of the limited resources for conference services;

(c) To increase engagement with non-governmental entities in view of the value of their contribution to the work of the Committee and its subcommittees;

(d) To organize events on the Monday and Tuesday before the session of the Committee to promote dialogue with the private sector and civil society;

(e) To strengthen the criteria for international non-governmental organizations becoming permanent observers of the Committee and to provide regular updates on their status with the Economic and Social Council.

5. Cooperation and dialogue between the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly

57. In 2014, in its resolution [69/38](#) on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, the General Assembly decided to convene, within existing resources, a joint ad hoc meeting of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability, and to include in the provisional agenda of its seventieth session, under the item entitled “General and complete disarmament”, a sub-item entitled “Joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability”. The joint ad hoc meeting was held on 22 October 2015.

58. In 2016, in its resolution [71/90](#) on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the General Assembly, decided to convene, within existing resources, a joint half-day panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees, to constitute a joint contribution by those Committees to the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session, under the item entitled “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”, a sub-item entitled “Joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability”. The joint panel discussion was held on 12 October 2017.

59. In 2018, in its resolutions [73/72](#) on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and [73/91](#) on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the General Assembly decided to convene a joint half-day panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability, and to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session, under the items entitled “General and complete disarmament” and “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”, a sub-item entitled “Joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability”. The joint panel discussion was held on 31 October 2019.

60. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard a proposal to recommend strengthened cooperation between the First and Fourth Committees through the organization of regular joint meetings of those Committees ([A/AC.105/1202](#), annex I, appendix).

6. Duration of sessions

61. In accordance with the decisions of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the meeting pattern is of two weeks each for the Scientific and Technical

Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in February and March, respectively, and one week and a half for the Committee in June, the total meeting time amounting to five and a half weeks. The Committee may decide on an ad hoc basis to extend or shorten the duration of a particular session whenever there is such a need (A/58/20, annex II, appendix III, paras. 13–14).³

62. At its fifty-sixth session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee heard various proposals with regard to the duration of the sessions (A/AC.105/1202, annex I, appendix), namely:

(a) Instead of shortening the sessions of the Legal Subcommittee, to establish more working groups or consider a wider range of agenda items;

(b) To review the possibility of adjusting the duration of subcommittee sessions to align them with the needs of the subcommittees;

(c) To revisit the working paper submitted by Germany containing a proposal for a renewal of the structure of the agenda and organization of work of the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/C.2/L.293).

7. Visibility and outreach

63. At its fifty-eighth session, the Legal Subcommittee took note of a proposal to request that the Secretariat invite States Members of the United Nations to inform it: (a) about their current activities in outer space and their plans for the future in that regard; (b) whether they were parties to the five United Nations treaties on outer space; and (c) whether they were members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space or plan to become members (A/AC.105/1203, para. 275).

³ At its twenty-fifth session, in 1982, the Committee agreed that the recommendation of the Committee concerning the three-week duration of the Legal Subcommittee had been taken in the light of the agenda of that session and was without prejudice to future sessions of the Subcommittee. The Committee also agreed that it was understood that, if the agenda so demanded, future sessions of the Legal Subcommittee might be extended to a fourth week (A/37/20, para. 63).