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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIZA-ESCALANTE (Costa Rica)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 51: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/33/20)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/33/212)

AGENDA ITEM 52: PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING; REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

1. Mr. HÄGGLÖF (Sweden) said that the recent achievements in the exploration and use of outer space illustrated the rapid development of space technology. In his own country, a Swedish station for the reception of LANDSAT data had started to operate as part of the European Space Agency Earthnet System and an extensive study was being conducted on the possibilities of establishing a Nordic system for direct broadcasting by satellite.
2. The United Nations was the natural forum for promoting international co-operation in outer space, and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees had an important role to play. The United Nations programme on space applications was of great importance for spreading the use of space technology and should be given increased financial support, especially because of its value for developing countries.
3. Reports about possible plans for the development of anti-satellite systems had focused attention on a problem that could have serious implications for the peaceful use of outer space. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament had declared that measures should be taken to prevent an arms race in outer space. It was to be hoped that the discussions on that matter initiated by the two major space Powers would lead to an early and satisfactory conclusion. The increasing use of space technology for practical purposes meant that it was in the interests of the international community as a whole that outer space should remain a domain of peaceful development and international co-operation. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space also prohibited States from placing weapons of mass destruction in outer space. The United Nations should therefore not only watch developments closely but also consider what actions could be taken to prevent an arms race in outer space.
4. During the year, considerable attention had been paid both in the Outer Space Committee and in the two Sub-Committees to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, and it had been possible to reach agreement on action to be taken. It was to be hoped that the working group of experts to be set up by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee to consider technical aspects and safety measures would lay

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(Mr. Hägglöf, Sweden)

the basis for internationally agreed safety regulations for the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. His Government would actively contribute to those efforts.

5. The Committee had also agreed that States which launched satellites carrying nuclear power sources should be required to inform countries concerned when there was a risk of radio-active materials reaching the earth, or its atmosphere. When the General Assembly confirmed that duty, which was embodied in the draft resolution (A/SPC/33/L.3) now before the Special Political Committee, an important step would have been taken to increase safety in outer space.
6. His delegation welcomed and supported the recommendation that a second United Nations conference on outer space should be convened because it believed that such a conference could contribute to a greater sharing by all countries of the benefits to be derived from space technology and could clarify the need for increased international co-operation in that field. The particular aim of the conference should be to help the developing countries to take advantage of different space applications. If it was to be a success, it would have to be carefully prepared, and his delegation noted with satisfaction the recommendation that the preparations should start in 1979. It would be wise to hold the conference on outer space at a time when the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, to be held at Vienna in 1979, could be taken into account.
7. It was regrettable that the Legal Sub-Committee had made no progress on principles to govern the use of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. Only a few, easily identified issues remained to be resolved, and his delegation believed that a final compromise could be found in the ideas put forward by Canada and Sweden in the Sub-Committee in 1977. Agreement should be sought on the following: a principle governing consultations and agreements which properly reflected the International Telecommunication Union rules and regulations and also contained a provision on notification and consultations between the broadcasting and receiving States, a balanced text for the preamble, and reconsideration of some of the principles proposed by the working group of the Legal Sub-Committee, which would become redundant when the principle on consultations and agreements was accepted.
8. The new technique of remote sensing of the earth by satellite had aroused growing interest in Sweden, whose experience showed that almost all countries could benefit greatly from its use. In that context, the United Nations should play an active role, especially in promoting the use of remote sensing in developing countries. When discussing the legal implications of remote sensing, it was essential to have a clear understanding of the technical factors involved. There must therefore be better co-ordination and communication between the two Sub-Committees. A balance between possible disadvantages and benefits of remote sensing could be achieved along the following lines: firstly, remote sensing should be carried out with the greatest possible international participation so as to enable all countries to enjoy its benefits; secondly, data collected by remote sensing satellites should be as freely accessible as possible to all; thirdly,

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(Mr. Hägglöf, Sweden)

developing countries should be given adequate assistance to enable them to interpret and use remote sensing data themselves. In that context, the need to strengthen the United Nations programme on space applications must be recognized. In view of the importance of technical assistance in that field, Sweden had provided financial means and experts for the first on-site training seminar of the United Nations programme held recently in Nairobi.

9. His delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution (A/SPC/33/L.3) now before the Committee and hoped that it would be approved unanimously.

10. Mr. MIRCEA (Romania) emphasized the growing desire of States to participate in the study and solution of present and foreseeable problems related to outer space and the need to develop international co-operation, which was the only means of enabling all mankind to benefit from the progress of space science and technology.

11. Romania had a national space applications programme, and its specialists were participating in international activities designed to obtain better knowledge of outer space. It had one operational and three planned ground stations for international satellites such as INTELSAT and METEOSAT and intended to build a processing centre for agricultural data obtained from remote sensing. It co-operated in the INTERCOSMOS programme, and one of its cosmonauts was to participate in a space flight. In that connexion, it congratulated all States which had made progress in space activities, particularly the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic, whose cosmonauts had joined those from the Soviet Union in the Soyuz space ship.

12. As a member of the Outer Space Committee, Romania was actively participating in the drafting of generally acceptable principles and standards for relations among States, which should take into account the fact that outer space was and must remain the common heritage of all mankind.

13. It was regrettable that the Outer Space Committee and its Sub-Committees had not succeeded in completing work which had been on their agenda for seven or eight years. Despite the complicated nature of the subjects under discussion, it should be possible, with goodwill on all sides, to find solutions in line with the fundamental principles of relations among States which would encourage co-operation on an equitable basis, taking full account of the priority needs of developing countries. The Committee should take advantage of its role in preparing the new United Nations conference on outer space to work out a plan containing practical measures and recommendations to States and specialized agencies designed to develop international co-operation in all forms.

14. With regard to the treaty on the moon and other celestial bodies, once the principle that outer space was the common heritage of all mankind was accepted, there should be no more difficulty about other aspects of the text, such as those relating to the natural resources of the moon.

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(Mr. Mircea, Romania)

15. Some progress seemed to have been made on the draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, but it did not seem reasonable that there was still hesitation about reaffirming certain fundamental principles, such as respect for the sovereign rights of States and non-interference in internal affairs, or the need to obtain the consent of the receiving State before starting such broadcasts.

16. With regard to remote sensing, the draft principles should provide for respect for the permanent sovereignty of States over natural resources and access by all States to the greatest possible volume of data obtained by remote sensing. It was a sound idea to set up a group of experts to deal with that subject, and if the group was open to all it would make it easier to draft a generally accepted set of principles.

17. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the United Nations programme on space applications was in the future to appear as a separate item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. In that connexion, he reaffirmed the belief of his own and other delegations that a study should be made of the need to provide further assistance to the developing countries with regard to the application of space technology, which would entail an expansion of the programme on space applications.

18. The second United Nations conference on outer space should provide an opportunity to evaluate the results obtained and the existing possibilities in the application of space science and technology and should adopt practical measures for giving effect to the scientific, technical, political and legal conclusions of the conference. It should mark an advance towards the establishment of a new international economic order, the aims of which included the more rational utilization of the resources of the earth, the elimination of inequalities among countries, and better use of the intellectual and material potential of mankind.

19. Mr. GARBA (Niger) said that, since the questions dealt with in the Committee on Outer Space affected the whole international community, it had been wise to expand the membership of the Committee to include diverse points of view, particularly those of developing countries like Niger. It was also gratifying to note the tangible expressions in the Committee and its Sub-Committees of the will of Member States to co-ordinate their space activities for the benefit of all countries; the Austrian draft treaty on the exploitation of the resources of the moon, for example, would, inter alia, declare the moon and its resources to be the common heritage of mankind.

20. His delegation had emphasized in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee the impact that the proper application of space technology, and particularly the proper use of remote sensing data, could have on agriculture and mining. It therefore fully supported the Sub-Committee's view that there was no scientific or technical basis for a sensed State not having timely and non-discriminatory access to data of its territory and that the dissemination of data obtained by remote sensing must be subject to prior consent and should be made available freely to the sensed State as an expression of respect for its sovereignty and not be distributed to third parties

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(Mr. Garba, Niger)

without its consent. The agreement on the transfer and use of remote sensing data concluded by a group of socialist countries was an illustration of that approach to the problem. The developing countries should also enjoy free access to the elementary techniques which would enable them to benefit from the results of space exploration and remote sensing of the earth. In that connexion, the Committee on Outer Space had emphasized the importance of providing adequate training facilities, including on-site training, in all aspects of remote sensing for those countries. Expansion of the programme on space applications should make it possible to increase the number of seminars and fellowships devoted to that subject. The ITU world conference on radio communications to be held in 1979 would also have a positive effect on the dissemination of data dealing with the practical applications of space technology, and the proposed United Nations conference on outer space would serve as an effective means of disseminating space applications data.

21. The ultimate aim of space applications was, of course, to break down the barriers of distance between peoples and create instant communication. It would be a pity if that aim was frustrated by efforts to protect concealed interests and risky ventures into cultural or ideological aggression, which would foster distrust among nations and make a mockery of international co-operation. As a land-locked developing country, Niger lacked the resources required for the "export" of political ideology and sought a climate of tranquillity in which to pursue its efforts to achieve economic and social development. Consequently, it was prepared to support the Outer Space Committee's efforts to elaborate sound principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting.

22. With regard to the use of nuclear power sources in space, he recalled his delegation's position in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee: there was a serious danger that space would eventually be exploited for military purposes by the space Powers, and all countries, regardless of differences in levels of development or political systems, must work together to develop effective guarantees against space accidents and to organize emergency assistance to victims. His delegation was glad that the question would be discussed again at the next session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee by a working group of experts.

23. Mr. MABILANGAN (Philippines) said that the Philippines, which was one of the new members of the expanded Committee on Outer Space, regarded the increase in the latter's membership as a reaffirmation of the role of the United Nations as focal point for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space and of the vital importance of space applications in preserving the natural environment, preventing or mitigating the harmful effects of natural calamities, accelerating economic development and improving the quality of life on earth.

24. The Committee had established a legal framework for international co-operation in space activities, and a greater assertion of political will on the part of the more advanced States could bring to fruition its work on draft treaties relating to the moon, the use of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting and the remote sensing of the earth from space.

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(Mr. Mabilangan, Philippines)

25. His delegation looked forward to future consideration by the Sub-Committee of the Outer Space Committee of the questions of space transportation systems and the use of nuclear power sources in space. It considered it urgent, in the interest of applying space technology to improve productivity in developing countries, to enhance the latter's technical capability. It therefore welcomed the increased emphasis by the United States Government on international co-operation as a means of deriving maximum benefits from space applications as well as the more advanced stage of co-operation in the INTERCOSMOS programme led by the Soviet Union.

26. His Government appreciated the work being done in organizing seminars and fellowships on remote sensing to benefit developing countries and the willingness of the more technologically advanced countries to share technology. For its part, the Philippines had hosted the 12th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of the Environment during the past year. His delegation also supported the policies of certain specialized agencies which were utilizing remote sensing in their programmes, in particular, the "grassroots approach" of FAO. He hoped that the programme on space applications would receive greater financial support, especially from UNDP, and that the proposed second United Nations conference on outer space would be held not later than 1983, before the anticipated next quantum leap in space technology.

27. His Government was particularly interested in the application of new space technologies to meteorology and had been greatly heartened by the efforts of WMO, in implementing its Tropical Cyclone Project, to obtain basic meteorological data and discover ways of mitigating the harmful effects of typhoons and storms, particularly in Asia. It was also happy to note that WMO was co-operating with other agencies active in the region, including ESCAP, UNDRO and the League of Red Cross Societies, and was perfecting its disaster prevention capability. According to WMO's latest report on the Tropical Cyclone Project, five geostationary satellites were expected to be operational in 1978, so that all tropical areas of the world would be under constant surveillance and would receive data on the early detection of tropical cyclones. The 1978-1979 programme of the Project indicated that it was of direct concern to the World Weather Watch and the Operational Hydrology Programme and that it contained a research component which, it was to be hoped, would be supported by more advanced countries in the form of manpower and financial and technical resources. Not only the Philippines, which regularly suffered devastation from tropical cyclones, but all tropical areas and, ultimately, the whole world would benefit from research with the use of satellites.

28. Mr. CHIGRINOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic), referring to draft resolution A/SPC/33/L.3, noted with satisfaction that it stressed the common interest of mankind in furthering the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. His delegation welcomed the reference in the draft to the successful conclusion of the outer space missions of the Salyut-6 and Soyuz spacecraft with the participation for the first time of cosmonauts from the

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(Mr. Chigrinov, Byelorussian SSR)

Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the German Democratic Republic together with cosmonauts from the USSR. It should also be noted that the scientific research complex comprising Salyut-6 and Soyuz had established endurance records in space. For the first time, fuel, equipment and materials had been supplied to a spacecraft by a shuttle vessel.

29. The congratulatory messages sent by Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Husák to the Soviet and Czechoslovak cosmonauts on board the joint flight had observed that international co-operation in space was further evidence of the fraternal relations existing between socialist countries and further proof of the strength of socialist internationalism. The experience gained in space research by socialist countries under the international programme INTERCOSMOS was a striking example of the effectiveness of international co-operation in space exploration.

30. In supporting operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution under consideration, his delegation believed that greater efforts should be made to complete the harmonization of the text of the agreement on the moon. In that connexion, it shared the view expressed in paragraph 61 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/33/20) that the text of the tentative draft agreement could facilitate the reaching of a consensus on an international instrument relating to the moon and other celestial bodies.

31. With regard to the question of the legal status of the natural resources of the moon, his delegation was of the opinion that the relevant provisions could be set out in an additional protocol to the agreement and that at some later time, depending on the progress achieved in the exploration of the moon, it might be possible to examine the provisions of the draft with a view to clarifying and supplementing them in order to work out generally acceptable binding regulations.

32. His delegation was impatiently awaiting the conclusion of work on the elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial satellites for direct television broadcasting. Efforts made in the Legal Sub-Committee gave reason to hope that in the near future the delegations concerned would be able to reach agreement on the remaining provisions and formulate a new draft principle on "consultations and agreements between States". The importance of that principle was clear, since international direct television broadcasting by satellite could be carried out only subject to strict respect for the sovereign rights of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

33. With regard to the question of remote sensing of the earth, his delegation considered that the progress achieved in the elaboration of basic principles governing such activities did not mean that substantial progress had been achieved on the dissemination of information derived from satellites or on the matter of the prior consent of sensed States. The question should therefore continue to be one of the Committee's priority items.

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(Mr. Chigrinov, Byelorussian SSR)

34. Due consideration should also be given to other matters which had become urgent, such as the study and protection of the environment, the use of solar energy, the deployment of large satellites in the geostationary orbit and the delimitation of outer space.

35. His delegation stressed the importance of the provisions of the draft resolution endorsing the future work of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, and it appealed to all concerned to make efforts to implement those provisions.

36. His delegation shared the view that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be the preparatory body for the second United Nations conference on outer space.

37. Mr. CALDERÓN FRANCO (Mexico) said that, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/33/L.3, his delegation hoped that it would be adopted by consensus, since the text was the result of efforts to reconcile the different views expressed in the Committee and clearly reflected the work done in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and in its two Sub-Committees.

38. As a member of the Committee on Outer Space, his delegation had already stated its views on the matters under discussion. It would continue to co-operate actively with the other members of the Committee with a view to achieving further progress in the latter's work.

39. His delegation endorsed the principle set forth in the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution with regard not only to the important issues under consideration but also to other issues which were being discussed in other United Nations bodies, such as those relating to general and complete disarmament and decolonization. Aware that that principle must be applied in accordance with reality, his Government had convened the first preliminary meeting on conventional weapons in Latin America with a view to the establishment of machinery to set limitations on such weapons. Previously, it had taken the initiative to establish the first nuclear weapon-free zone in Latin America. Those facts showed that his country had always been in the vanguard of efforts to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security on earth and that it was seeking to do the same with regard to the serious questions relating to the exploration and use of outer space.

40. Mr. CAMPS (Uruguay) said, with regard to the draft resolution under consideration, that the intention set out in the third preambular paragraph was not reflected in the remainder of the draft. One of the objectives of the use of outer space was precisely to enable all States to enjoy the benefits derived therefrom, and the United Nations should continue to function as a focal point for international co-operation in that field. However, the draft contained no substantive provisions on the subject. He noted that it referred to General Assembly resolution 32/196 A but not to resolution 32/196 B, which requested the

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(Mr. Camps, Uruguay)

Secretary-General to ascertain the views of Member States on ways and means of allowing participation of additional Member States in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. With regard to the fifth preambular paragraph, his delegation failed to understand the scope of the words "in developing the rule of law" and would welcome clarification on that point from the sponsors.

41. Referring to operative paragraph 10, he recalled his delegation's support of the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space relating to the convening of a second United Nations conference on outer space, but would request that the proposed preparatory committee should be open to all States wishing to participate in its work. That was the only way to ensure the success of the conference. In his delegation's opinion, the draft resolution should have set a tentative date for the holding of the conference.

42. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee was prepared to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/33/L.3 without a vote.

43. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.