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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF
OUTER SPACE

PROVISIONAL AGENDA, WITH ANNOTATIONS, FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

To be convened at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 26 June 1978, at 3 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Statement by the Chairman
3. General debate
4. Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/216)
5. Report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/218)
6. Question of convening a United Nations conference on outer space
7. Other matters
8. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly

ANNOTATIONS

Item 4: Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/216)

At its fifteenth session, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee in its report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session (A/32/20, para. 71) and General Assembly resolution 32/196, continued to give priority to the consideration of (1) questions relating to remote sensing of the earth by satellites; (2) the United Nations programme on space applications; and (3) options relating to a possible United Nations conference on outer space matters.

The views and recommendations of the Sub-Committee concerning the above items are contained in paragraphs 16-114 of the Sub-Committee's report. The attention of the Committee is drawn in particular to the paragraphs of the Sub-Committee's report listed below, which require the consideration of the Committee:

(a) Remote sensing

- (i) Paragraphs 22-30, contain the substance of discussions held in the Sub-Committee regarding the classification and dissemination of remote sensing data.
- (ii) Paragraphs 50-58, discuss the role of the United Nations in co-ordinating training and technical assistance in data acquisition and dissemination.
- (iii) Paragraphs 60-68, set out the discussions in the Sub-Committee on the role of the United Nations in co-ordinating future systems, particularly with reference to the establishment of a panel of experts to carry out such co-ordination.

(b) United Nations programme on space applications

Paragraphs 72-93, contain a review by the Sub-Committee of the United Nations programme on space applications and a recommendation for approval of the proposed programme for 1979.

(c) Sounding rocket launching facilities

Paragraph 127 sets out the recommendation of the Sub-Committee for continued United Nations sponsorship of the rocket launching facilities in India and Argentina.

(d) Questions relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space

The questions relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was brought to the attention of the Sub-Committee, for annotations on which see item 7 (b) below.

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(e) Future work of the Sub-Committee

Paragraphs 143-150 discuss matters relating to the future work of the Sub-Committee (paras. 143-144), and recommend priority items to be considered at its sixteenth session in 1979.

Item 5: Report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/218)

At its seventeenth session, the Legal Sub-Committee, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee in its report to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly (A/32/20, para. 36) and paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 32/196, continued to consider the following items with the same high priority: (a) the draft treaty relating to the moon; (b) the elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting with a view to concluding an international agreement or agreements; and (c) legal implications of remote sensing of the earth from space, with the aim of formulating draft principles on the basis of common elements identified by it. The views and recommendations of the Sub-Committee on the above questions are contained in paragraphs 21-45, as well as in annexes I-III of the Sub-Committee's report.

The Sub-Committee also considered questions relating to the definition and/or delimitation of outer space and outer space activities, bearing in mind questions relating to the geostationary orbit. The consideration of these questions are reflected in section IV of the report of the Sub-Committee.

Matters relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space was also brought to the attention of the Legal Sub-Committee, for annotations on which see item 7 (b) below.

The attention of the Committee is drawn in particular to the following paragraphs of the Sub-Committee's report which require the consideration of the Committee:

(a) Moon treaty

Paragraph 4 of annex I, in which Working Group I of the Sub-Committee expressed the hope that a working paper presented by the delegation of Austria would facilitate the reaching of a consensus on an international instrument and that the work on the agreement could be taken up at the forthcoming session of the Committee or at the 1979 session of the Sub-Committee.

(b) Direct television broadcast by satellites

Paragraph 29, in which the Sub-Committee recommended that the Committee, when considering the question of direct television broadcasting at its forthcoming session, should also ascertain whether the elaboration of draft principles could be concluded or whether further progress could be achieved at that session.

(c) Remote sensing

Paragraphs 30-34 and annex III, which summarize the efforts by Working Group III of the Sub-Committee to reach agreement or compromise on the texts of principles elaborated earlier, as well as on the new principles elaborated at the seventeenth session.

(d) Definition and/or delimitation of outer space

Paragraphs 39-45 summarize the views of the Member States of the Sub-Committee on the definition and/or delimitation of outer space, including questions relating to the geostationary orbit, as recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 32/196.

(e) General (procedural)

Paragraph 18 recommends that the Committee consider the adoption in its own reports and in those of its other subsidiary bodies of the following terminology: "the view was expressed", when referring to one delegation; "some delegations", when referring to a view expressed by more than one delegation, and "other delegations", when referring to a contrary view expressed by more than one delegation, and the discontinuance of all other terms, such as "a number of", "certain", "several", etc.

(f) Future work

In view of the fact that the Sub-Committee did not make any specific recommendations regarding its work programme for 1979 or priorities to be given to items on its agenda, the Committee may have to decide on this matter.

Item 6: Question of convening a United Nations conference on outer space

Paragraphs 94-114 of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/216) summarize the views, objectives, and recommendations of the Sub-Committee concerning the convening of a United Nations Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In paragraph 113 (ii), the Sub-Committee suggests that, among the steps to be taken initially, the Committee discuss and seek a consensus on the draft agenda, organization, etc. of the proposed conference. In paragraph 145, the Sub-Committee recommends to the Committee that the Sub-Committee be informed if further work on this item should be performed.

Item 7: Other matters

(a) Questions relating to the geostationary orbit

Discussions in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the above are contained in paragraphs 115-120 of its report (A/AC.105/216). In the context of the future work of the Sub-Committee, some delegations felt that the item should be retained on the agenda of its next session and that the study prepared on

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the subject by the Secretariat (A/AC.105/203) should be updated as appropriate. The Sub-Committee recommended (para. 146) that it be informed by the Committee of any specific work it should perform on this item, as required by the Committee or the Legal Sub-Committee.

Consideration of this item in the seventeenth session of the Legal Sub-Committee is described in paragraphs 35-45 of its report (A/AC.105/218).

(b) Questions relating to the use of nuclear power sources in space

Various aspects of the use of nuclear power sources in space were brought to the attention of both the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee.

In the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, in view of the widely divergent views regarding action to be taken on this item, the recommendation was made that the Committee, at its forthcoming session, continue the exchange of views, and that, in this pursuit, it consider its own role and that of its Sub-Committees, as well as the procedures and mechanisms most appropriate for carrying out this role, including the possibility of establishing a working group of experts. The Sub-Committee also recommended that, to facilitate the work of the Committee in this regard at its forthcoming session, the Secretariat compile information provided by States, United Nations organizations, and international scientific organizations concerning the uses of nuclear power sources in outer space for presentation to the Committee. Views of Member States will be made available as received.

Paragraphs 16 and 17 of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee refer to the legal aspects of the use of nuclear power sources in space. The Committee was requested (a) to decide whether the matter requires consideration by the Legal Sub-Committee with a view to determining what steps the Committee and its two Sub-Committees should take, and (b) to make the appropriate recommendations to both Sub-Committees to that effect.

(c) Participation of additional Member States in the Committee

In resolution 32/196 B of 20 December 1977, the General Assembly, in deciding to expand the Committee's membership to 47, also requested the Secretary-General to ascertain the views of Member States on ways and means of allowing participation of additional Member States in the Committee, and after receiving the views of the Committee, to report to the Assembly at its thirty-third session. The Committee, is therefore, required to provide this information for the General Assembly.