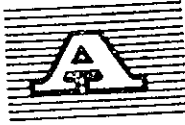


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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 6 September 1972, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. JANKOWITSCH

(Austria)

- Consideration of the reports of
  - (a) The Legal Sub-Committee (continued)
  - (b) The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, including the summary of the preparatory session of the Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellites (continued)

This record is issued in final form pursuant to the decision taken by the Committee in September 1970 (see Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/8020, para. 10)).

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## CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF

- (a) THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/101) (continued)
- (b) THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/102), INCLUDING THE SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATORY SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON REMOTE SENSING OF THE EARTH BY SATELLITES (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: There are two representatives who wish to speak this afternoon. Before calling on them I would appeal to those representatives who have not yet spoken and who wish to speak to consider doing so this afternoon in order that we may make use of the time which is available to us now and which may not be available at a later stage.

Mr. YOSHIDA (Japan): Mr. Chairman, as you stated in detail in your opening statement, we have continued to witness during the past year the accomplishment of a most remarkable scientific and technological success, realized by the two main space Powers, in the field of the exploration and use of outer space. My delegation particularly welcomes the increasing trend of closer co-operation in this field between the United States and the Soviet Union, which culminated in Moscow in the form of an agreement of co-operation in this field between the two countries. We are convinced that it will only serve to enhance the cause of world peace.

The space activities carried out by my country have continued to make steady progress since we met in September 1971. Greatly encouraged by the success of two test satellites, Japan launched its first scientific satellite Shinsei at the end of September 1971 immediately after the last session of this Committee.

This was followed recently, on 19 August to be exact, by the successful launching of another scientific satellite named Denpa, Japan's No. 4 satellite. The primary objectives of both of those satellites are to carry out scientific observations in the ionosphere and magnetosphere. I should like to add that we are proceeding with the plan to develop, as part of our co-operation with the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP), a geostationary meteorological satellite in the near future. In fact, the basic plan has already been cleared by the Space Activities Commission of Japan, the highest policy-making organ of my country in the field of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

As I already had the occasion of elucidating in some detail our increasingly vigorous activities in the field of space at the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee last May, I need not repeat the theme. But I wish to emphasize our firm determination that Japan should make a significant contribution to the exploration and the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the spirit enunciated in the outer space Treaty.

(Mr. Yoshida, Japan)

I now turn to the reports of the two Sub-Committees which are before us. I shall deal first with the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. As one of the representatives who had the privilege of attending the last session of that Sub-Committee, I should like to say that, as Dr. Wyzner, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, eloquently explained to us yesterday, the work we did in Geneva could well be described as quite substantial. This is clearly shown by the fact that the Sub-Committee was able to complete the first and even the second reading of the two draft treaties during that session. Now, in the course of discussion of the two draft treaties before us, a number of important and substantive matters were raised and discussed, and some of them are still to be solved. Let me therefore touch again upon those pending points of substance and make clear where we stand and what my delegation's views are on them.

First of all, with regard to the draft treaty concerning the moon, I should like to begin by extending our warm congratulations once again to the Soviet Union for its initiative in presenting that draft treaty. It certainly is an important contribution towards the further codification of space law based on the fundamental outer space Treaty of 1967. We also greatly appreciate the valuable contributions of the United States and other delegations which have submitted a number of useful working papers.

My delegation is happy to see that the Sub-Committee has been successful in drawing up a broad outline of a draft moon treaty. Japan's basic position with regard to the draft moon treaty is that it should be complementary to the outer space Treaty of 1967 in the sense of adding detailed and specific provisions concerning the moon to the provisions of that treaty, and that it should by no means alter that treaty's basic principles. One of the remaining points of substance to be agreed upon with regard to this draft treaty is its scope; in other words, whether or not it should also cover celestial bodies other than the moon. I should like to say that it is still the feeling of my delegation that at this stage the specific treaty on which we are working should focus on the moon only, and not extend its scope to other celestial bodies.

(Mr. Yoshida, Japan)

On the question of draft article X, concerning natural resources, the delegation of Japan subscribes to the view that it is still too early at this stage of human activities to solve the problem of sharing the benefits of the resources of the moon or other celestial bodies. The quality and the quantity of the resources of the moon are still quite unknown to us and, needless to say, that is even more true of the resources of other celestial bodies. It seems economically and technically very difficult even to imagine how to exploit and utilize those unknown resources. It is also the considered view of my delegation that to stipulate that the resources of the moon are a common heritage of mankind would be tantamount to the introduction of a new concept which would, in our view, go beyond the scope of the basic outer space Treaty. We should be cautious and circumspect in dealing with this sort of new and not well-defined notion.

Finally, I should like to make it clear that in general Japan favours the idea of advance notification of missions to the moon and, in particular, we are of the opinion that the existing brackets in paragraphs 2 and 3, of draft article VI should be removed, in order to prevent as much as possible the disruption of the existing balance of the environment of the moon by such means as the placement of radio active material on or around it. Having said that, I should like to indicate that my delegation is quite prepared sincerely to consider any compromise proposals or suggestions in our joint effort to reach agreement on those remaining points, hopefully even during the current session of the Committee.

I now turn to the other draft treaty before us, namely, the draft treaty on registration of objects launched into outer space. Here I wish first of all to pay a tribute to the delegations of Canada and France for their important initiatives in presenting a draft convention on the registration of objects launched into outer space. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation for their efforts in trying to focus our attention on the urgent necessity of somehow setting up an international system of registration of objects launched into outer space which, in the view of my delegation, is long overdue.

(Mr. Yoshida, Japan)

Japan's basic position on the problem of registration has been consistent for many years. We favour the establishment of an international registration system; we believe that registration should be compulsory and that the standard form of registration should be co-ordinated on an international basis; we believe also that a central register should be kept in the United Nations which would be accessible to all countries. My delegation is happy to see that those basic ideas of ours, which were contained in the original Canadian and French texts, are duly reflected in the first-reading draft contained in the report and that there seems to have emerged a broad consensus among members of the Sub-Committee on the utility of establishing an international system of registration and a willingness to work towards that end.

As I have had occasion to make detailed comments on the various aspects of the draft treaty which is before us, comments in which my delegation's position has been made clear, I shall refrain from going into details here. Nevertheless, I wish to repeat this important consideration of ours, that is, that when we talk about the establishment of an international system of registration we must always be mindful of, and pay careful attention to, the harmonious future development of the exploration and the use of outer space. We should therefore be careful not to discourage future initiatives in this field. In concrete terms, a new international system of registration should not be conceived in such a way as to constitute a too heavy economic or technological burden, resulting in the slowing down of the over-all pace of space technology.

In this context, we have said that markings on space objects should be called for only in a reasonably possible manner, taking into account also that marking techniques, which develop in accordance with scientific and technical advances, differ also in each country. This point was well taken care of at the first reading of the Canadian-French text, and, I hope it will remain so.

(Mr. Yoshida, Japan)

Finally, I should like to express my sincere hope that substantial progress on these matters can be made at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee, with the active participation in the debate of all the members of the outer-space Committee.

I now turn to the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. First of all, with regard to the activities of the United Nations in the field of space applications, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation for the excellent work done by Mr. Ricciardi. My delegation feels that, thanks to the relentless and praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Ricciardi, the ground work in this field has been accomplished and that we have been witnessing steady progress in United Nations activities in this field, from the first stage of providing general information to the public to that of more concentrated efforts, as a part of which we have noted the visit of Professor Ricciardi to developing countries in order to assess their needs on the spot. My delegation is certainly one of those which deeply regret the departure of Mr. Ricciardi. My delegation is also one of those which endorse that part of the report of the Sub-Committee relating to United Nations activities on space applications.

That does not mean, however, that we are entirely satisfied with its present status. We are of the view -- as I have already said in one of my interventions in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee -- that the activities in the field of space application should be further invigorated and that adequate financial resources and manpower should be provided to the United Nations if we truly desire that the United Nations properly discharge its important task in this field.

In the field of international co-operation, as a follow-up to what I said at the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, I am happy now to be able to announce more concretely that the Government of Japan is studying the offer of six scholarships in the field of satellite communication. The details of its offer will be communicated later to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

With regard to the remote sensing of the earth by satellites, my delegation appreciates the result of the preparatory session of the Working Group held in May. I do not fail to pay a tribute to the able Chairman of the Working Group,

(Mr. Yoshida, Japan)

Mr. Franco Fiorio of Italy, whose vigorous efforts have contributed greatly to the initiation of our ground work in this field. My delegation hopes that, with more available data in hand -- especially through the brilliant success of the United States ERTS-A experience -- the Working Group will be in a better position next year to do its first substantial work in this field.

Mr. Chairman, before concluding my remarks, I should like to say that I completely share the views you expressed in your opening statement yesterday to the effect that this parent Committee should not be a rubber-stamp body.

I also believe that, in order that the United Nations may be able to play a truly effective role as a central co-ordinator in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space, this Committee, as its pivotal organ in the field, should be able to give proper policy directives to the Sub-Committees, which are composed mostly of experts of each country. This Committee should, in a word, be a more policy-minded body. I regret to say that this has not, at least to my mind, been the case in recent years. I feel that some effective measures should be taken to curb this lamentable trend in our Committee. My delegation therefore suggests, as one of the conceivable steps, that the session of our Committee should be held in June rather than in September when many representatives around this table are very busy in preparation for the coming General Assembly session and thus do not have enough time to devote themselves most effectively to the work of the Committee.

As we all know, next year will provide favourable conditions for this experiment in that the proposed periods for the two Sub-Committees are April and May, unlike previous years. I would therefore hope that my suggestion will cause no great difficulty to the members of the Committee and that it will be accepted unanimously.

In concluding my remarks I should like to reaffirm that Japan attaches great importance to this whole field of the peaceful uses of outer space and that it is our intention to do our best to contribute to future progress and to international co-operation in this field.

My delegation wishes to reserve its right to intervene on the matters upon which I have not touched today when it seems necessary to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I have noted the suggestions of the representative of Japan, in particular those concerning the date of the holding of the next session.

Mr. SEFIANI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, last May, our Committee witnessed an important event, namely, your election to preside over our Committee and the election of the representative of Romania, Mr. Ion Datcu, as Vice-Chairman. Speaking for the first time since those developments, my delegation wishes to convey to you, Sir, and to Mr. Datcu, its congratulations and to assure you of its full collaboration.

Our Committee is called upon to consider the reports of its two Sub-Committees, and it is on the basis of those reports that my delegation will state its views here.

With respect to the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, that body dealt primarily with two problems: on the one hand, questions concerning the moon, and, on the other, the registration of space vehicles. On the basis of General Assembly resolution 2779 (XXVI) of last year, the Sub-Committee noted the draft convention submitted by the Soviet Union and, subsequently, the draft introduced by Argentina. As was explained to the Committee yesterday by the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, the Working Group set up at the time made progress in this field. That is an important step towards the codification of this branch of international law. We hope that the Sub-Committee will be able to make further progress in its work on this question by finding satisfactory solutions which will be acceptable to all parties concerned.

The second matter dealt with in the Legal Sub-Committee was that of the registration of vehicles launched into outer space. At its meetings last May, the Sub-Committee arrived at a compromise text between the Canadian and French drafts. This is an important step towards adequate solutions. For our part, it seems very logical that, following the convention on international liability for damage caused by objects launched into space adopted last year, a convention on registration should be adopted because registration seems to us to be a satisfactory method for better assessing that liability.

We understand the difficulties of some delegations and the technical objections they have raised. For our part, we remain open to compromise in order

(Mr. Sefiani, Morocco)

to arrive at the necessary satisfactory solutions. That is our view on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee.

Now, what is the situation concerning the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee?

(Mr. Sefiani, Morocco)

I should like to take this opportunity to restate our appreciation of the work of Professor Ricciardi, the Expert on Space Applications, who is to leave us shortly. My country was one of the first to be visited by Professor Ricciardi, and we were able properly to appreciate the ideas that he gave us at the time.

The work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee over several years has brought out two truths, I would even say two axioms. If, on the one hand, certain space exploration activities seem to be reserved for certain great Powers, on the other hand, the application of other space technology may be useful for the development of the countries of the third world and, in some respects, may prove to be less costly than the application of the more traditional technology. The other certainty which has emerged over the years from the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee is that the countries of the third world do not fully realize the full potential that they can draw from the application of certain space technology, and even assuming that they would wish to do so, it is always difficult for them to have access to such techniques.

That is why we have given our full support to the biennial programme of the expert. We think that it is very useful for the developing countries in order for them to become better aware of all the possibilities inherent in space technology. However, we can only regret that this programme has had the same funds available for three consecutive years, whereas in the normal course of events it should have been in full course of expansion.

We do understand the current financial difficulties confronting the United Nations. My delegation has always been among those taking a very responsible attitude towards these financial questions. But as a developing country -- and here I believe I express the feelings and views of other countries in the same category -- an expansion of the Expert's programme would, it seems to us, be very desirable.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Unfortunately, there are no other representatives who wish to speak this afternoon.

Mr. BRUCE (Canada): I wish to ask whether between now and one of our future meetings the Secretariat could let us know what the implications are of the proposal that has just been made by the representative of Japan that this Committee should meet next June. Having in mind the sessions of the two Sub-Committees, would it be possible to get documentation and the reports of the two Sub-Committees prepared, translated and submitted in time for a session next June? I know that that is a busy time of the year in the United Nations system; there are problems of interpreters, conference services, and so on. I think it would be helpful for this Committee to know, when it prepares its report, whether the Japanese proposal is practicable.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure that the Secretariat will respond favourable to the request of the representative of Canada, and will let us know before we have to decide on the date of the next session whether a session in the month of June would be technically feasible in terms of all the aspects that he has mentioned.

The next meeting of the Committee will take place at 3 p.m. tomorrow. I hope that many representatives will wish to speak at that time. In any case, I have no doubt that we shall have a fruitful meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.5 p.m.