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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its sixty-first session

Draft resolution on a United Nations-designated international year of asteroid awareness and planetary defence in 2029

1. At its sixty-first session, held from 29 January to 9 February 2024, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space recommended to the Committee that 2029 be declared a United Nations-designated international year of asteroid awareness and planetary defence, dedicated to a worldwide campaign to raise awareness regarding asteroids and to highlight the collaborative efforts being undertaken by the Committee to mitigate the potential hazard posed by the impact on the Earth of near-Earth objects, and as an excellent opportunity for a global educational campaign about near-Earth objects.

2. In that regard, the Subcommittee took note of the guidelines for the proclamation of international years, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 and the related General Assembly resolutions 53/199 and 61/185 (A/AC.105/1307, para. 151).

* A/AC.105/L.337.

Annex

Draft resolution

International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence, 2029

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the unique platform at the global level for international cooperation in space activities represented by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee and assisted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat,

Recalling the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development[1] and its implementation plan, in which Member States acknowledged that the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space had enriched our collective knowledge and revolutionized life on Earth, that space science and technology had become intrinsic to our daily lives and brought an abundance of unique and fundamental benefits to Earth, and that, as the space community moved forward with its space exploration endeavours, space would continue to serve as a source of inspiration and innovation and to provide applications for the benefit of humankind,

Recalling also its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), organized by the Committee, and the resolution adopted by the Conference entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[2] in which participating States called for, inter alia, improving the international coordination of activities related to near-Earth objects, harmonizing the worldwide efforts directed at identification, follow-up observation and orbit prediction, while at the same time giving consideration to developing a common strategy that would include future activities related to near-Earth objects,

Noting the establishment, in response to a recommendation of UNISPACE III,[3] of the Action Team on Near-Earth Objects of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and of the Working Group on Near-Earth Objects of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, to consider international procedures for handling the near-Earth object impact hazard and to engage international stakeholders,

Recalling its resolution 68/75 of 11 December 2013, in which it welcomed with satisfaction the recommendations of the Working Group on Near-Earth Objects for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat, which were endorsed by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and by the Committee at its fifty-sixth session,[4]

Recognizing the importance of information-sharing in discovering, monitoring and physically characterizing potentially hazardous near-Earth objects to ensure that all countries, in particular developing countries with limited capacity in predicting and mitigating a near-Earth object impact, are aware of potential threats, and emphasizing the need for capacity-building for effective emergency response and disaster management in the event of a near-Earth object impact,

Recalling its resolutions 70/82 of 9 December 2015 and 71/90 of 6 December 2016, in which it noted with satisfaction the establishment of and work carried out by

[1] Resolution 76/3.

[2] *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19–30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/68/20), para. 144; and A/AC.105/1038, para. 198 and annex III.

the International Asteroid Warning Network and the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group to implement the recommendations for an international response to the near-Earth object impact threat, with the support of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, serving as the permanent secretariat of the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group,

Noting that near-Earth objects are asteroids and comets whose orbit brings them closer than 1.3 astronomical units, or approximately 195 million kilometres, to the Sun,

Noting also that potentially hazardous objects are a subset of the population of near-Earth objects with an Earth minimum orbit intersection distance of less than 0.05 astronomical units, or approximately 7.5 million kilometres, and a size larger than about 140 metres, indirectly inferred from the object's brightness,

Noting further the importance of awareness-raising with regard to asteroids and comets as celestial bodies that retain clues as to the early history and formation of the solar system and that could potentially pose an impact hazard to Earth, and recalling in this regard the proclamation, in its resolution 71/90, of 30 June as International Asteroid Day to observe each year at the international level the anniversary of the Tunguska impact event over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908 and to raise public awareness of the asteroid impact hazard,

Noting that, on 13 April 2029, the asteroid 99942 Apophis will pass safely but in very close proximity to the Earth, at about 32,000 kilometres above the surface of our home planet, thus inside the geostationary orbit, not posing any threat to the Earth, which in astronomical terms constitutes an extremely close approach, making the asteroid visible to billions of people with the naked eye in the clear night sky,

Noting also that this will be a once-in-a-millennium event and a unique occasion for a worldwide campaign to raise awareness with regard to asteroids, their scientific and resource value and the potential hazard they pose,

Reaffirming its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries, in particular paragraphs 1 to 10 of the annex thereto, on the agreed criteria for the proclamation of international years, as well as paragraphs 13 and 14 of the annex, stating that an international year should not be proclaimed before the basic arrangements necessary for its financing and organization have been made,

1. *Decides* to declare 2029 the International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence, in order to take advantage of the unique occasion of the close approach of 99942 Apophis in 2029 for a worldwide campaign to raise awareness regarding asteroids and to highlight the collaborative efforts being undertaken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to mitigate the potential hazard posed by the impact on the Earth of near-Earth objects, and as an excellent opportunity for a global educational campaign about near-Earth objects;

2. *Invites* Member States, space agencies, United Nations entities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, astronomers, local communities and academia, to observe the International Year, as appropriate, through activities such as astronomical observation and scientific awareness-raising with regard to asteroids, promoting widespread access to new knowledge and observing experiences of asteroids, inspiring young people and empowering science communities, in particular in developing countries, and assisting the citizens of the world in understanding the nature of near-Earth objects, and to strengthen existing networks and facilitate new ones with a view to connecting amateur astronomers, educators, scientists and communications professionals with the public at large through local, regional, national and international activities;

3. *Invites* the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, mindful of the provisions contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, to facilitate the implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, space agencies, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders;

4. *Stresses* that the costs of all the activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met through voluntary contributions, including from the private sector;

5. *Requests* the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, mindful of the provisions of paragraphs 23 to 27 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, to inform the General Assembly at its eighty-fifth session regarding the implementation of the present resolution, including an evaluation of the International Year;

6. *Invites* all relevant stakeholders to make voluntary contributions and to provide other forms of support for the International Year.