



Permanent Mission of the Federative Republic of Brazil

Item 12: *Future role and method of work of the Committee.*

[*Check against delivery*]

Madam Chairperson,

While the current working methods have demonstrated their resilience, a comprehensive review might be timely to adjust to the recent increase in membership of the Committee and to the number of topics being dealt with both by the committee and the subcommittees, as well as its six full-membership working groups.

A good beginning would be for this subcommittee to instruct you, as our chairperson, to convene informal consultations on the drafting and the approval of several reports before the next COPUOS session in June. Nowadays, this is a burdensome, repetitive, time-consuming and expensive exercise, which finds no pair in other international organizations of similar size and vocation. Yet, member states have at their disposal simpler, alternative, ways to adopt the report, all of them not original. For instance, it is possible to appoint a rapporteur, helped by a group of friends; or to entrust the chairperson to produce a “chairperson’s report”, on his/her own responsibility; or to leave it to the secretariat, again on its own responsibility, to circulate “minutes of the meeting” after the sessions. The decisions, for their turn, should continue to be taken by member states, fully preserving our practice to pursue consensus.

It is equally important to ensure that COPUOS has the capacity to receive the demands of its member states and to accommodate them based on the principle of maximum flexibility of the rules of procedure. This subcommittee is currently addressing two unresolved issues that relate to that. The most advanced proposal concerns the establishment of an agenda item to address the protection of dark and quiet skies for science and society. Taking into account the significant -I would say almost unanimous- support that this topic has received in the last session, Brazil hopes that member states will be able to reach an agreement this year, so the substantive work can begin. The subject is dear to the astronomers’ community and provides member states with the opportunity to harmonize national practices, which does not include micromanaging member states activities or reducing their policy space.

The second and more salient topic concerns the submission of new draft resolutions to the General Assembly, like the one drafted by Russia. To guarantee the legitimacy and technical quality of the texts, there is a procedure to be followed, which necessarily starts at COPUOS and its expert bodies. There is also the political approach to be adopted in the face of these new and difficult themes, like the military uses of civilian assets, that result from high levels of distrust, conditioned by incomplete information about the interests and capabilities of the parties. On that regard, COPUOS, along with other UN bodies, like the Conference on Disarmament, are better positioned to provide the concerned sides with objective and technical information that not only reduces differences in identifying mutually acceptable outcomes, but also works to mitigate zero-sum perceptions and stress that the existing stalemate or differences require an immediate solution, within the frame of the UN space treaties.

Thank you.