



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 31 AND 32 (continued)

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/31/20; A/C.1/31/3)

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 (A/31/20; A/C.1/31/3)

Mr. MERKULOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Space research, the conquest of space, is one of the most important problems of our time, and one which affects the interests of the whole of mankind. The life of every people and the system of international relations will in the future feel the effect of the solution to these problems, as indeed they will feel the effect of the solution to a number of problems affecting our whole planet. This idea was expressed at the twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, L. I. Brezhnev, and this is indeed being confirmed by the whole course of development of international co-operation in outer space.

The Ukrainian delegation believes that the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space presented to the First Committee in document A/31/20 enables us to take a favourable view of the work done by the Committee as a whole and by its two Sub-Committees, the Scientific and Technical and Legal Sub-Committees. The development of broad international co-operation in outer space has been promoted by the further strengthening of the position of the forces of peace and progress in the world which prevail in the political climate of détente, and embodiment of the principle of peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems. Such an important international document as the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe also provides for joint activities in the field of space research.

A considerable amount of experience in such activities has been accumulated by the socialist countries. On the basis of the comprehensive programme of socialist

(Mr. Merkulov, Ukrainian SSR)

economic integration the socialist countries with every passing year have further intensified their co-operation in the conquest of space. In the time which has elapsed since November 1965, when the fundamental guidelines were laid down for the work, space research centres have been set up and groups of qualified specialists have been trained.

The Soviet Union was a pioneer in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and has made its technology available for joint exploration of the sun, the ionosphere, cosmic rays, meteors and links between the sun and the earth. The work done by means of the Intercosmos series of satellites and the Vertical geophysical rockets has become part of the heritage of world science and is serving the interests of the whole of mankind. Important research was done in July of this year by the Intercosmos 16 satellite, which carried on board scientific apparatus made in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Sweden.

The intergovernmental agreement of socialist countries on co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, recently signed in Moscow, provides the Intercosmos programme with a new technological basis. In the near future manned space craft will be placed in orbit with international crews on board. With regard to the question of the participation of citizens of Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Cuba, Mongolia, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia in flights of Soviet space crafts and stations, the relevant decision has been taken. This is the embodiment of socialist internationalism, a consummation of Lenin's ideas of brotherhood and friendship among peoples. The new socialist world here again demonstrates its great advantages and its mighty creative opportunities and resources.

Soviet space science is advancing along a broad front. In the country's scientific institutions detailed study of the results obtained by the unmanned interplanetary stations Venus 9 and Venus 10 is continuing. The flight of Luna 24 was marked by considerable achievements. It brought back to earth samples of lunar soil from a depth of almost two metres. Valuable work in the interests of science and the national economy was also done on board the orbital station Salyut 5.

(Mr. Merkulov, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian SSR is likewise making its contribution to the study of outer space. At the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, V. V. Shcherbitsky, pointed out that Ukrainian scientists are taking an active part in the exploration of outer space. For example, at the E. O. Paton Electro-Welding Institute, fresh methods have been worked out for welding metals in a state of weightlessness. Kiev scientists have also carried out an experiment on the growth of micro-organisms in conditions of space flight, which was included in the Soyuz-Apollo programme. Much work is also being done jointly with foreign specialists.

The Ukrainian delegation notes with satisfaction the increased role of the United Nations in organizing international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. As is clearly evident from the report we are considering today, definite progress has been made in many directions. The preparation within the United Nations of scientific-technological and juridical principles for remote sensing of the earth by means of satellites is of considerable economic importance. A step forward has been taken also in formulating the principles governing the use of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. Television broadcasting to other countries is intended to help nations understand each other better, promote mutual enrichment of culture, and give people an understanding of historical traditions. It should, however, be borne in mind that favourable results can be achieved only on the basis of strict observance of the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. What I have said applies, of course, also to other media of mass information, which should create an atmosphere of trust among States and not be used for purposes of misinformation, as is still being done in certain Western countries. We believe that the Committee as a whole and its Legal Sub-Committee should endeavour to conclude the preparation of the draft principles to govern activities in the field of direct television broadcasting.

The Ukrainian delegation supports the request of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in paragraph 74 of the report that the thirty-first session of the General Assembly should consider the possibility of maintaining its agreed system of alternating the sessions of the Sub-Committees alternately in Geneva and in New York.

Mr. BRANKOVIC (Yugoslavia): As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time in this Committee, may I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the other officers of the Committee, on behalf of the Yugoslav delegation and in my own name, on your election to your important functions. Your election as Chairman of the First Committee is a sign that the deliberations of our Committee will be in able and competent hands and that consequently we can expect positive results. It is a particular pleasure for my delegation that you are the representative of friendly Poland, with which Yugoslavia maintains traditionally close relations and co-operation.

My delegation has always attached particular importance to the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Although my country is not a member of the Committee, we have been following with keen interest the work of its two sub-committees, namely, the Legal Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and have endeavoured, for our part, to make our contribution to these activities through consultations and mutual exchange of information with Member States.

This year, as in earlier years, we have studied the Committee's annual report very carefully and have come to the conclusion that the Committee has, generally speaking, again achieved notable results, although no final solutions have been reached with regard to some of the most important issues, or rather, no consensus has yet emerged with respect to them.

We are pleased to note the progress that the Committee has achieved with regard to 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. The long and exhaustive discussions in the Legal Sub-Committee proved to be successful and the Committee is in a position to note with satisfaction that nine principles have been agreed upon and formulated. Undoubtedly, this constitutes an important step forward, when we bear in mind the importance of these questions and of the problems arising therefrom. Three more principles remain to be considered, of which the question of unlawful or inadmissible broadcasts deserves particular attention. We hope that the Legal Sub-Committee will succeed in reaching agreement in these remaining areas at its next session, so that all this, taken together, may amount to one more step in the direction of a general and broadly accepted international agreement in this field.

(Mr. Brankovic, Yugoslavia)

It is also important that Working Group III of the Legal Sub-Committee has been able to formulate the texts of five draft principles and to identify three new common elements relating to the legal implications of earth resources surveys by remote sensing satellites. We believe that this constitutes a success achieved by the Committee in its work this year and that it provides a solid foundation for further progress.

My country has always attached particular attention to the role and activity of the United Nations. Together with other non-aligned countries, it has been insisting on the necessity of strengthening the role of the world Organization where, through co-operation and dialogue, possibilities are offered for ensuring the progress of all on the basis of equal rights, independence and non-interference in internal affairs. The recent fifth summit conference of non-aligned countries, held in Colombo, devoted special attention to this question and adopted a resolution on the United Nations.

My delegation wishes to lay stress, on this occasion also, on the important role that the United Nations should play in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is a component of the United Nations system and, in keeping with the tasks entrusted to it, it must also contribute, for its part, to the strengthening of the role of our Organization on the bases laid down in the Charter. The over-all activity of the international community in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space is becoming ever more important for further development and co-operation among peoples and States in the effort to eliminate, primarily, the economic difficulties plaguing the developing countries.

One of the most important questions in the contemporary development of international relations is, no doubt, the establishment of the new international economic order, whose foundations were laid down at the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should, together with the whole United Nations system, promote, by its activities and the results achieved, this new process in international relations. In this connexion, I should like to emphasize in particular the importance of such questions as the transfer of space technology and its application in developing countries; remote sensing, and use of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting.

(Mr. Brankovic, Yugoslavia)

Consequently, my delegation believes that the United Nations programme on space applications has played an important role in promoting co-operation in this sphere. This programme should be enabled to play such a role in the future as well. We note with particular satisfaction, in paragraph 46 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, that it has endorsed the United Nations programme on space applications for the year 1977, as well as the fact that a number of delegations have expressed the view that this programme should be extended as regards both its content and its scope and that it should receive greater financial support. In this respect, it is also important that progress has been achieved in the co-ordination of work within the framework of the United Nations system. We are glad to note that, as a result of such co-ordination, the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) has established a Sub-Committee on Outer Space Activities which will, we hope, operate successfully in co-ordinating activities within the framework of the United Nations system, particularly those concerned with the practical application of space technology.

(Mr. Branković, Yugoslavia)

The convening of a United Nations conference on outer space is closely linked with the question of activity of the United Nations and future results in the field of peaceful uses of outer space. We feel that work in this regard should evolve more rapidly and that we should receive, as soon as possible, replies from the Governments of Member States concerning the need, objectives, agenda and date of the United Nations conference. My delegation considers that the ever-growing importance of peaceful uses of outer space calls for an adequate regulation of activities in this field. The United Nations should play the main role in these efforts and, for this reason, we support the idea of convening a United Nations conference on outer space. We endorse, therefore, the conclusion of the Committee, contained in paragraph 55 of its report, that the United Nations Secretariat should be requested to prepare a study in depth on the question of convening a United Nations conference on outer space matters.

In spite of the successes achieved by the Committee during the last year, we cannot but note with regret that it has not yet made any progress with regard to such an important matter as the treaty relating to the moon. We note that the Committee has been marking time with regard to this problem for more than two years, namely, with respect to the question of the natural resources of the moon. For some time already, the Committee has been considering this question as a matter of high priority; however, no progress has yet been made with respect to articles X and X bis. My delegation wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to repeat, once again, what it has been constantly stressing when dealing with the work of this Committee, particularly with regard to this question, namely, that the natural resources of the moon should be the common heritage of mankind. My delegation therefore fully supports such an approach to the question of the natural resources of the moon. There is no need to remind the distinguished representatives present here that the General Assembly adopted at its twenty-fifth regular session the Declaration of Principles which proclaim the sea-bed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction as the common heritage of mankind.

When discussing the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space every year, the delegations of Member States in the First Committee usually note that the Committee has considered, as a matter of high order of priority, a

(Mr. Branković, Yugoslavia)

great number of questions, particularly the most important ones. However, judging by the progress made, one has the impression that -- in the light of the fact that special attention has been devoted to this matter -- somewhat more satisfactory results could have been achieved. My delegation emphasizes this with the best intention, expressing -- at the same time -- the wish that, in addition to the results already obtained, the Committee should achieve even greater successes in the field of peaceful uses of outer space, as one of the questions of the international community which is gaining in importance all the time.

The CHAIRMAN: I appreciate very much this kind reference by the representative of Yugoslavia to the friendly relations between our two countries. I should also like to thank him for his generous remarks addressed to me personally.

Lord BOSTON (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation may I congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We anticipate a successful session of the Committee under your guidance and that of your distinguished colleagues on the Bureau.

It is quite usual these days to hear complaints of the inadequacy of the achievements of United Nations bodies or of the way in which they carry out their work. In contrast I should like to begin my statement today with an expression of satisfaction at the results of the 1976 session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, and also at their method of work. Here is a body in which patient and tolerant efforts are made to reconcile the differences between strongly held national points of view. I should like to thank the Chairmen of the Main Committee, the two sub-committees and their various working groups for their contribution in this connexion.

The most beneficial international agreements are the ones in which the most effort has gone into harmonizing the position of Member nations. Working by consensus the Committee has drawn up four international agreements all of which I am glad to note are now in force. Consensus may mean that progress is slow but

(Lord Boston, United Kingdom)

it offers the best chance that at the same time progress will be sure. International instruments on space questions, worked out within the walls of the United Nations, stand the best chance of being accepted outside if they are based on compromise between the divergent views of States and on a full understanding of the relatively new and experimental technology involved. Both of these can take time to achieve.

Britain has a varied national space programme in which international co-operation plays an indispensable part. I am thinking primarily of our participation in the projects of the European Space Agency, in scientific satellites, applications satellites, applications satellites, Spacelab and the Ariane Launcher Development Programme. We are also collaborating with Italy over the SIRIO Satellite and have scientific programmes under way with the United States of America, the Nordic countries, India, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Holland. We welcomed the successful conclusion in September of the conference convened in London by the International Maritime Consultative Organization on the establishment of INMARSAT. In this instance, international co-operation in the use of space communications technology will, we hope, provide a useful service in ship-to-shore communications and in improving safety standards at sea.

Within the United Nations space applications programme we were pleased to act this year as host for a seminar in the applications of remote sensing. There was such a high demand from developing countries for places on this seminar, that we had, I regret to have to say, to turn many applicants away. Similarly, we were pleased at the response to our offer of fellowships for training in the uses of space technology in telecommunications.

I should now like to make a few comments on the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, beginning with remote sensing of the natural environment by satellite. In the view of the United Kingdom Government, international law as it stands at present does not impose any regulation, any inhibition even, upon a survey of the earth and its environment, including its natural resources, which is carried out from beyond the limits of national sovereignty and therefore from outer space. This is our basic conception of the law and it applies not only to the survey itself, to the collection of information, but also to the dissemination of that information.

(Lord Boston, United Kingdom)

However, we have long recognized that this statement of the strict legal position is not the whole story. There may be no existing inhibition in terms of international law, but there is a real and legitimate interest of the international community in such activities and in the way they are carried out. We understand the fears of those countries which foresee some adverse economic uses of information obtained by remote sensing. Guidelines or principles could be helpful therefore in relation both to the remote sensing activities themselves and also to the handling of the information which has been acquired through them in order to protect the interests and dispel the fears of sensed States. In so doing the right balance must be struck between the interests of those who have the technology and of those in respect of whom it is applied.

(Lord Boston, United Kingdom)

In considering what these guidelines should be, we base ourselves on the provisions of the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Thus, remote sensing should be carried out in the interests of the international community as a whole and not merely in the interests of the sensing State or indeed of any particular sensed State; it should be carried out on the basis of the fullest possible participation by all concerned, and in such a way as to promote freedom of scientific investigation and the widest possible dissemination of its results. We are sure that adequate protection for the sensed State can be found by developing the principles under which data and information are used and by elaborating others to govern participation by sensed States within a régime of free dissemination. We welcome the progress made at this year's session of the legal sub-committee in the elaboration of principles and the identification of common elements in the views of States. Next year's work on the legal implications of remote sensing should lead to the identification of new common elements, from which draft principles can be formulated. In the light of this further work, it may be necessary to make some slight changes in the principles already agreed upon in order to ensure internal consistency and balance.

One reason why my delegation sees the need for flexibility in the preparation of draft principles now and in the near future is that understanding of the technique of remote sensing is constantly being refined and extended. To take one example, enormous advance in the techniques of analyzing and interpreting raw data to serve practical purposes have been made in the past year or two, and some, even, have still to be published. Many speakers have already referred to the potential uses of remote sensing in crop forecasting. We should have a much better idea of the regulatory principles which will produce the best results on a global scale in this field when the Large Area Crop Inventory Experiment conducted by NASA and other similar programmes have run their course and have been evaluated. To take another example, the United Kingdom is particularly interested in use of space techniques including remote sensing for monitoring the environment.

However, a lot of work has still to be done to clarify the options we face and the best techniques for this kind of work. Then again, the characteristics

(Lord Boston, United Kingdom)

of sensors on board the future experimental satellites to follow Landsats 1 and 2 have not been precisely determined as yet. To summarize, the United Kingdom view is that the United Nations should not foreclose particular options for the beneficial use of this emerging technology by over-hasty restriction of the way in which global remote sensing can be carried out.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the continuation of work in the two sub-committees on the technical possibilities and the legal implications of remote sensing. We were interested in the proposals put forward this year by the USSR on separating data into "global" and "local" categories, with appropriate régimes for each. We hope that in accordance with the request of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the USSR will develop their ideas further.

We are also studying the proposal made by Canada under which the dissemination of raw data would be free while some restrictions would be imposed on the circulation of processed information. We do have some doubts whether such a distinction could be satisfactorily established by a general legal principle. The decision to impose restrictions must not, in our view, be left to the sensed State but should be compatible with the interests of all.

On direct television broadcasting by satellite, it is impossible to predict the exact uses of that. The use of indirect satellite broadcasting within a State for reception by community receivers or local relay stations is just beginning and preparations for broadcasting direct to people's homes on a regular basis within individual States are being made. But State-to-State direct broadcasting, the principal concern of the debate here at the United Nations, is a prospect for the end of the decade, if not for the beginning of the next. In our view, the interval which is left gives the Committee the opportunity to continue the search for common ground between opposing points of view on the outstanding issues of prior consent and participation.

My delegation took the opportunity offered by the debate on the report of the legal sub-committee in the main Committee to present in some detail our views on potential regulation of direct broadcasting from satellites. I will not go over the same ground now. However, I should like to reiterate that we consider the rights of the individual as laid down in international law to freedom of opinion, expression and to seek and receive information to be of the utmost

(Lord Boston, United Kingdom)

importance. States do not, in our view, enjoy absolute sovereign rights in respect of the information available in their territories. We acknowledge, however, that States may be concerned with the establishment of television broadcasting systems whose output can be seen and heard in their territories. For example, no one disputes that a State may call on its own domestic broadcasters to observe certain standards of decency, impartiality and respect for the truth. We oppose the imposition of restrictive measures on direct satellite broadcasting but we have no wish to prevent receiving States from consulting with sending States over the observation of such standards.

There are two further points related to the question of participation by receiving States which I would like to make. First, the radio regulations laid down by the International Telecommunications Union impose close regulation of the allocation of the limited radio frequencies available for satellite broadcasting, and an extensive period of notice for a receiving State of the intention of a sending State to establish a satellite broadcasting system. This period of notice would be available for consultations of the kind I have mentioned. Secondly, in view of the responsible attitudes adopted by world broadcasters and expressed in codes of conduct for the use of satellite broadcasting, for example, the Guiding Principles drawn up at Madrid in September 1974 by Broadcasting Organizations from North and South America, Europe and Asia, it is clear that some of the fears expressed about unrestricted use of broadcasting are unreal and exaggerated.

For the sake of brevity, I have concentrated on two subjects only from the Outer Space Committee's agenda. In conclusion, may I say that we look forward to further progress in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in each of its areas of activity. The United Kingdom will play its part in the search for practical ways in which space science and technology can be used for the benefit of all mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to the officers of this Committee and to me personally.

Ms. MURBERG MARTINSEN (Norway): Let me at the outset take the opportunity to convey to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space my Government's appreciation of the useful work they have carried out in the last year. The activity of the Committee and its suborgans is being followed with increasing interest and attention by the Norwegian authorities, as they are fully aware of the political and economic implications of the matters under discussion.

In our statement last year we emphasized the importance of utilizing available resources in the best possible way and avoiding wasting them on plans and projects that can only yield limited benefits. In-depth consideration should therefore be given to which areas and specific projects we should concentrate our efforts and resources on, having particularly in mind the requirements of the developing countries and the benefits such projects may confer to their further development. On behalf of my Government, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate these viewpoints, and I hope that they could be borne in mind when the planning and selection of specific studies and projects are being done.

One question to which my Government attaches particular interest and importance is the work relating to direct television broadcasting by satellites. We have noted with satisfaction that quite substantial progress has been achieved during the sessions of the Legal Sub-Committee this year, and that agreement has been reached on formulating nine principles that should govern activity in this field. This is most commendable and should inspire the Committee to achieve further progress. There is no doubt, however, that what remains to be solved is the very core of the problem, namely the relationship between the broadcasting State and the receiving State. If agreement is not reached on matters relating to consent and participation, programme content and unlawful or inadmissible broadcasting, we will run the risk of jeopardizing all the efforts which are being made to arrive at internationally acceptable principles in this field. To arrive at agreed principles is of great importance to all nations, and we share the view that States may have valid reasons for wanting to establish certain regulations regarding broadcasting by satellite emanating from other countries.

(Ms. Murberg Martinsen, Norway)

On the other hand, my Government is firmly committed to the principle of freedom of information, and is not in a position to accept rules of international law that may hamper freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, regardless of frontiers. One must not permit "national interests" to serve as an excuse to impose censorship or otherwise circumvent the basic right to information that all people have.

My delegation believes that a balance must be found and that it will prove possible to establish principles regarding consent and participation and programme content that reflect both the interests of the broadcasting and receiving States, the principle of freedom of information and the cultural integrity of each country. The joint Canadian/Swedish proposal of 1973 could, in our opinion, serve as a useful basis to achieve this goal. Such an approach would ensure that States with access to direct satellite broadcasting technology will be subject to a kind of licensing procedure for a certain period, while the contents of each separate programme would not be interfered with.

Another area to which my Government attaches significant importance is remote sensing of earth resources. We have noted with satisfaction that the Committee has been able to formulate the text of five draft principles and to identify three new common elements, and we hope that it will prove possible to draft additional principles on the basis of these common elements.

My delegation believes that the United Nations could -- and should -- play a significant role in establishing a system or organization that would ensure that information is distributed in a fair way and not misused. We are, however, fully aware that the establishment of such a system or organization may require a considerable period of time, and that it is necessary to work out a declaration or set of principles that could provide the necessary guidelines for the activities to be carried out in the interim period.

Remote-sensing activity must be carried out in accordance with international law. The existing rules are however, very few, and it is therefore imperative to arrive as soon as possible at universally accepted principles to avoid any misuse or activity that may prove to be to the detriment of some States. All States should

(Ms. Murberg Martinsen, Norway)

be given access to remote-sensing data relating to resources under their jurisdiction. A State's right to keep information regarding its natural resources confidential should also be respected, and a procedure for consultations should, in our opinion, be worked out between States that are subject to remote sensing and States that are obtaining such data.

My delegation would particularly like to stress the assistance that remote sensing of natural resources may render to the developing countries. The requirements of the developing countries should be one of the main priorities of remote-sensing activity. The developing countries should have at their disposal all information that might assist them in their economic development. Remote sensing of earth resources is a new and technologically demanding area, but information derived from it should form no exception to this principle.

I should also like to mention that my Government has recently decided -- subject to parliamentary approval -- to equip the telemetry station at Tromsø in the north of Norway to receive data from resource satellites. We hope that regional co-operation between the countries of northern Europe will be established in this field.

Regarding the question of a treaty relating to the moon, we understand that agreement has been reached on most of the provisions that eventually will have to be included in such a treaty. I should just like to express our hope that in the near future it will prove possible to find sufficient areas of common ground to solve the remaining problems.

The last item on which I should like to comment is the question of a possible United Nations conference on outer space matters. In our opinion, there are arguments in favour of such a conference, as this could give States which are not members of the Outer Space Committee an opportunity to take a more active part in the deliberations and policy-making. It should be considered, however, whether some aspects to be dealt with by such a conference could be covered by the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development to be held in 1979. In any event, a conference on outer space matters should be carefully prepared and its objectives clearly defined.

Mr. TODOROV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, I should like to express our deep satisfaction at the fact that you, Comrade Chairman, our friend and the representative of friendly Poland, have been unanimously elected Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We are sure that your training, experience and knowledge will enable you successfully to conduct the proceedings of this Committee. We also congratulate the other officers of the Committee upon their election to their posts.

With every day the scope of the activities of countries in the conquest of outer space for peaceful purposes is increasing. These activities have now become the everyday occupation of many people in a number of countries. It is difficult to enumerate everything that has been done in this area over the last year. However, this activity is so attractive and absorbing that we should not like to overlook the practical results that have been achieved this year, which have been quite properly regarded as important events both at the national level and at the level of international space activities for peaceful purposes.

In the autumn of 1975 the unmanned Soviet interplanetary stations, Venus 9 and Venus 10, covering a distance of more than 300 million kilometres, reached Venus. This was certainly an historic event, as for the first time two artificial satellites of Venus had been created. Unique samples of the surface of Venus were obtained and scientific research has been carried out.

Other successes of space science include the biological studies of the soil and atmosphere of Mars carried out by the unmanned United States space station.

It is both noteworthy and symbolic that in February of this year an earth space communication station was made available to the United Nations to enable the co-ordinator of the United Nations Forces in the Middle East to report to the Secretary-General at Headquarters.

As members of the socialist community, we take particular pleasure in noting that space co-operation among socialist countries is developing, deepening and strengthening with every day that passes. The material basis for this is the comprehensive programme of socialist economic integration. The regular launchings of satellites of the Intercosmos series and experiments with Vertical geophysical rockets are being carried out regularly and successfully to study problems of space physics, meteorology, biology, medicine, long-range communication and the natural resources of the earth.

(Mr. Todorov, Bulgaria)

On 13 July 1976 the Governments of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Hungarian People's Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Republic of Cuba, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Polish People's Republic, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic concluded an agreement on co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. On the basis of the tasks involved in carrying out the space programme for the further deepening and perfecting of socialist economic integration among the members of the Council for Mutual Economic Co-operation (CMEA), the contracting parties undertook to do everything possible to promote the further development of co-operation among the organizations in their countries concerned with the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The agreement provides for the following forms of co-operation: launching of space devices for scientific and practical purposes; creation of machinery for carrying out joint space research; conduct of experiments on geophysical and meteorological rockets; processing, analysis and use of the results of joint space studies for scientific and practical purposes; holding consultations among interested countries and provision, in accordance with the special agreement, of mutual scientific and technological assistance, including the exchange of technology on particular subjects and projects; exchange of scientific and technological documentation, and information. A conference of the heads of the national organizations of the contracting parties has been established to take decisions and make recommendations on the programmes and plans for the joint work. The decisions and recommendations of the conference are adopted by majority vote. They are not binding on contracting parties that did not favour their adoption, but these parties may subsequently associate themselves with such decisions and recommendations.

A new and important landmark in the development of space co-operation among the socialist countries was the agreement of 14 September 1976 providing that astronauts from socialist countries might fly on board Soviet spacecraft. In accordance with this agreement, astronauts from all the socialist countries that take part in the Intercosmos programme will be trained at the Soviet space centre, named after Yuri Gagarin, for flights that are to take place between 1978 and 1983.

(Mr. Todorov, Bulgaria)

Finally, we should like to congratulate our Soviet and German comrades on their recent successful joint experiment, undertaken on the Soyuz 22 spacecraft.

The Bulgarian delegation believes that a favourable view should be taken of the work done by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space over the last year. The Committee has made considerable efforts to carry out the tasks entrusted to it under resolution 3388 (XXX) of the General Assembly, and a number of practical results have been achieved.

First of all I should like to point out that the Legal Sub-Committee produced and agreed on nine principles on direct television broadcasting by means of artificial earth satellites: purposes and objectives, applicability of international law, rights and benefits, international co-operation, States' responsibility, duty and right to consult, peaceful resolution of disputes, copyright and neighbouring rights, and notification of the United Nations. To this should be added that, in the light of the progress achieved in connexion with related problems, it was decided that there was no further need for formulating principles governing problems of spill-over or disruption. All this is certainly substantial progress, which should encourage us to believe that a way will be found of producing universally acceptable principles on direct television broadcasting that would promote cultural exchange, closer relations among the peoples of our planet, and the development of co-operation among States in the interests of peace, security and progress.

Of course, we should not forget that a great deal of serious work remains to be done on the formulation of and agreement on draft principles for the purpose of concluding an international agreement, or agreements, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 2916 (XXVII), adopted on the initiative of the Soviet delegation. Some principles -- indeed, very important ones -- on direct television broadcasting, remain to be agreed upon. These are the principles governing consent and participation, content of programmes and unlawful and inadmissible broadcasts. Of particular interest is the principle of prior consent of the State to direct television broadcasting by another State. We are firmly convinced that a solution to this problem can and must be sought only on the basis of two universally acknowledged principles of contemporary law -- State sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. We think that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space might undertake to complete the work on draft principles for direct television broadcasting in 1977.

(Mr. Todorov, Bulgaria)

A favourable result of the Committee's work this year has been the fact that the Legal Sub-Committee has begun work on draft principles to govern activities in the study of natural resources of the earth by means of space technology. On a preliminary basis it has been possible to achieve agreement on a text of five principles relating to objectives of remote sensing, the applicability of international law, international co-operation and participation, protection of the natural environment and the provision of technical assistance. In our view, the expression on a preliminary basis most appropriately describes the results achieved, as the number of square brackets in the text of these five principles speaks for itself and makes it clear that considerable effort is still needed to achieve final agreement.

A step forward has also been the definition of three common elements in the provisions relating to (a) the role of the United Nations and other international organizations in the co-ordination of activities and the provision of technical assistance; (b) the provision of information on impending natural disasters; and (c) the prohibition of the use of data and information to the detriment of other States. All this in our view constitutes a good start. The Committee therefore should continue its work on the basis of the results achieved so as to prepare as soon as possible draft principles for the activities involved in studying earth's natural resources by means of space technology.

Unfortunately, the Committee was unable to achieve similar results with regard to all items on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee.

With regard to a draft treaty affecting the moon, in spite of the serious efforts made by various delegations to achieve a compromise solution on two outstanding issues affecting the scope of the treaty and the status of natural resources of the moon, the Committee was unable to change the prevailing situation which can best be described as a standstill. In spite of this we are still of the view that consultations and talks which have taken place have been useful and have made it possible to shed further light on the problem, for which a solution must be found. A key issue was that of the status of the natural resources of the moon. We believe that a solution to this problem is possible in the near future, provided that all delegations take a realistic and flexible position.

(Mr. Todorov, Bulgaria)

On the whole, we believe that we cannot deny the tremendous importance of the work of the Committee in its work on and agreeing upon principles and norms of international space law. There is no doubt that a great deal of meticulous work remains to be done if we do not wish to be left behind by the rapid development of scientific and technological progress in this field. We therefore are of the view that the Committee is correct in recommending to the Legal Sub-Committee that it should continue its consideration of three questions as a matter of priority:

(1) The draft treaty relating to the moon; (2) 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; (3) 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 the Sub-Committee.

In our view the Committee correctly devoted considerable attention to the problems which fall within the competence of its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, or rather the question of the co-ordinating role which could be played by the United Nations in the future development of work on remote sensing.

It should be pointed out that the Secretariat provided the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee with a number of studies which because they are so substantial and important have created a solid basis for further debate. I should particularly like to refer to the study on the advisability of conferring on the United Nations a possible co-ordinating role in future operational activities of remote sensing, the study on the organizational and financial requirements of future activities in space, the study on the needs of users of the data yielded by remote sensing obtained through satellites and the present and projected expenditures and advantages in connexion with the practical application of the technology of remote sensing. These studies have helped the Committee to collate a great deal of difficult factual material, connected both with the present preliminary experimental stage and also with the possible future global or international operational stage or remote sensing of earth from space.

Furthermore, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee was able to reach certain conclusions and make certain comments.

(Mr. Todorov, Bulgaria)

It seems to us that two of the Committee's conclusions are of special interest. First, the conclusion that "remote sensing systems would one day, like satellite weather and communication systems, become operational and, in that event, the use of satellite data could be expected to become an integral part of national economies as well as planning activities".

Secondly, its conclusion that "there was scope for the United Nations to play a co-ordinating role in the field of remote sensing from satellites even in the current preoperational/experimental phase and that such role might, without infringing on existing bilateral agreements, comprise co-ordination inside and between regions on such points as training and technical assistance and programme orientation of special interest to the developing countries".

Furthermore, I should like to stress that the programme of the United Nations on the practical application of space technology is proceeding successfully. We are happy to note that within the framework of this programme in 1977 study seminars will be held in a number of countries.

With regard to the question of a possible United Nations conference on outer space, we continue to think that this is something which requires the most careful study. We therefore support the request of the Committee to the Secretariat of the United Nations to prepare a detailed study on the question of convening a United Nations conference on the problems of outer space.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that our Committee will adopt by consensus a resolution which would ensure the necessary political and organizational conditions so that the Committee, which is a co-ordinating centre of international co-operation in the field of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, may continue its successful work in the interests of peace and progress. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Todorov, for the very friendly remarks he addressed to the officers of the Committee and to me personally.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As no other representative wishes to speak at this stage, I should like to devote a few moments to the question of the organization of work.

The Committee will recall that, at our organizational meeting held two weeks ago, we decided to allocate 8 to 10 meetings to the consideration of agenda items 31 and 32, from 18 October to 21 or 22 October. As the situation stands now, I think that with some luck we could complete consideration of the two items by Thursday evening or, at any rate, by Friday morning. I have been informed that the draft resolution will be introduced on Thursday morning, and hopefully it will, as in the past, be adopted by consensus. So I would suggest that we could perhaps decide now to finish the general discussion on Thursday afternoon, and then, depending on the situation, take a decision on the draft resolution at that same meeting on Thursday afternoon or, if necessary, at Friday morning meeting. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to these suggestions.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**
THIRTY-FIRST SESSION
Official Records*



FIRST COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1976
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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