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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE

PROVISIONAL AGENDA, WITH ANNOTATIONS, FOR THE
NINETEENTH SESSION

To be convened at United Nations Headquarters
on Monday, 21 June 1976, at 3 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Statement by the Chairman
3. General debate
4. Consideration of:
 - (a) Report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/171)
 - (b) Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/170)
5. Other matters
6. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly

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ANNOTATIONS

Item 2 Statement by the Chairman

1. The Chairman will also present, for adoption by the Committee, a provisional schedule concerning organization of work for the nineteenth session. (The provisional schedule will be distributed to members of the Committee prior to the nineteenth session).

Item 4 (a) Report of the Legal Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/171)

2. The Legal Sub-Committee at its fifteenth session considered the following items with the same high priority: (a) the draft treaty relating to the moon with a view to completing it as soon as possible; (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, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2916 (XXVII) of 9 November 1972; and (c) the legal implications of remote sensing of the earth from space, taking into account the various views of States expressed on the subject, including proposals for draft international instruments.

3. The Sub-Committee also considered matters relating to the definition and/or delimitation of outer space and outer space activities.

4. The substantive part of the Sub-Committee's report on these items is contained in paragraphs 19 to 33 as well as in annexes I to III:

(i) Draft treaty relating to the moon

5. The Sub-Committee re-established Working Group I on this item. The Working Group, as it did at the fourteenth session of the Sub-Committee, decided again to give priority to the question of the natural resources of the moon, regarded by many delegations as the problem whose solution would facilitate an agreement on the two remaining issues relating to the scope of the treaty and the information to be furnished on missions to the moon. The Working Group, in discussing the question of the natural resources, based itself on the texts of articles X and X bis as elaborated during the fourteenth session, a number of words and sentences of which, owing to lack of consensus, appeared in square brackets, and certain provisions of which, for the same reason, were drafted in two versions. In the course of the fifteenth session serious efforts were made to reach a compromise solution but they proved unsuccessful since no consensus could be realized and consequently, no new text relating to the debated issue was elaborated.

(ii) Elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting

6. Working Group II, which was also re-established by the Sub-Committee and to which this item was assigned, continued the consideration of the set of principles worked out by the Working Group and noted by the Sub-Committee at its

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fourteenth session with a view to removing square brackets and alternatives, as well as improving the language of agreed texts which appeared in the last year's report of the Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/147, annex II). As a result of discussions and informal consultations, the Working Group was successful in formulating nine principles, including minor drafting changes to two principles agreed to last year. It was also decided not to formulate the principles on spillover and disruption. There was also an exchange of views on three subjects, namely consent and participation, programme content and unlawful/inadmissible broadcasts, but it was incomplete. The texts of the nine principles, as agreed to by the Working Group and noted by the Sub-Committee are set out in the report of the Chairman of the Working Group (annex II).

(iii) Legal implications of remote sensing of the earth from space

7. The Sub-Committee re-established Working Group III to deal with this item and it formulated the texts of five draft principles the first of which were based on the common elements worked out at the fourteenth session of the Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/147, annex III) and the fifth draft principle was on a subject which was formulated after the Working Group had identified a new common element. The Working Group was also successful in identifying three further common elements. These, along with the texts of the five draft principles which are set out in the report of the Chairman of the Working Group (annex III), contains square brackets around words on which no agreement was reached.

(iv) Matters relating to the definition and/or delimitation of outer space

8. The Sub-Committee considered this item at one meeting in the course of which a number of useful statements were made by delegations in which they stressed the renewed importance of the subject and expressed the wish that it should receive more detailed examination at future meetings and it was also emphasized that this examination could be undertaken if the question were to be included as a priority item in the agenda when one of the items at present on the agenda is resolved, but a view was also expressed questioning the need to treat this as a priority item at this time (para. 33).

(v) Schedule and work of the next session of the Sub-Committee

9. The Sub-Committee recommended that its sixteenth session be held from 25 April to 20 May 1977. It was noted that, as previously decided by the Committee, the sixteenth session of the Legal Sub-Committee would be held in New York (paragraph 16).

10. The Sub-Committee was of the opinion that at its next session it should continue to consider with the same high priority the issues covered by the draft treaty relating to the moon, the elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellite for direct television broadcasting and the legal implications of remote sensing of the earth from space (para. 17).

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Item 4 (b) Report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (A/AC.105/170)

11. At its twelfth session, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee gave priority to the consideration of (1) questions relating to remote sensing of the earth by satellites; (2) consideration and review of the United Nations programme on space applications; (3) possible United Nations conference on space applications; (4) review of the future role and work of the Sub-Committee.

(i) Remote sensing of the earth from space

12. In examining this item, as reflected in paragraphs 26 to 81 of its report, the Sub-Committee considered both the current pre-operational experimental phase as well as a possible future global international operational remote sensing system or systems giving stress, however, on the current pre-operational/experimental phase.

13. The Sub-Committee also took note with interest of the feasibility study on a possible co-ordinating role for the United Nations in future operational activities in remote sensing from satellites contained in document A/AC.105/154 and stated that while it was not in a position to endorse the full plan of action in paragraph 96 thereof, the Sub-Committee agreed to the points listed for the current year. In this connexion the Sub-Committee noted with interest the section on remote sensing in document A/AC.105/166 regarding co-ordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. The Sub-Committee came to the conclusion that there seemed to exist scope for some co-ordinating role in the field of remote sensing from satellites even in the current pre-operational/experimental phase of the activity and it noted three possibilities among options suggested by various delegations to achieve the objective, which it recommended for consideration by the Committee at its nineteenth session. The three options are to be found in paragraph 80. The Sub-Committee was of the view that the selection of any of these options regarding the involvement of the United Nations in the field of remote sensing would inevitably affect its own future role (paras. 75-81).

14. In paragraph 82 the Sub-Committee, reiterating the view that further study of organizational, technical, and financial matters should progress together with consideration of the legal aspects of remote sensing, recommended that:

(a) The Secretariat should submit a revised version of the feasibility study on a possible co-ordinating role for the United Nations contained in document A/AC.105/154.

(b) The Secretariat should prepare a listing of available studies, reports, etc., relevant to the consideration of remote sensing from satellites.

(c) The Secretariat should update, for the next session of the Sub-Committee, document A/AC.105/155 and Add.1-3 containing information concerning existing or planned national or regional ground stations for direct reception of remote sensing data from satellites.

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15. The Sub-Committee also noted in paragraph 82 that with a view to facilitating the task of the Secretariat in undertaking further studies on the subject of a future operational space segment, the Committee should request the Secretary-General to seek from Member States or international agencies engaged in remote sensing activities any information they might consider useful for this purpose in regard to their activities in launching remote sensing satellites in the pre-operational, and possibly operational, phase of remote sensing.

(ii) Review of the United Nations programme on space applications

16. The Sub-Committee reviewed and commended the United Nations programme on space applications in paragraphs 84 and 98 of its report. In regard to the proposed space applications programme for 1977, the Sub-Committee agreed to the programme as proposed by the United Nations Expert with the financial implications set out in paragraph 3 of document A/AC.105/C.1/L.74 (para. 96). A number of delegations expressed the view that the United Nations space applications programme should be expanded as regards both its content and its scope and that it should receive greater financial support (para. 97).

(iii) Options relating to a possible United Nations conference on space matters

17. Having studied the question of the convening of a United Nations conference on space matters, through an informal working group, and having noted in paragraph 101 the views expressed in this connexion by Member States so far, the Sub-Committee recommended in paragraph 103 that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space:

(a) Request the Secretary-General to address a letter to all Member States, reminding those who have not already done so to reply to the questionnaire, and asking all Member States to indicate if they would be interested in participating in such a conference, and, if so, what they would see as its main objectives;

(b) Request the United Nations Secretariat, on the basis of the facts outlined in paragraphs 101 and 102 of the Sub-Committee's report including replies to the Secretary-General's letter, to prepare a study in depth on the question of convening a United Nations conference on space matters.

(iv) Schedule and work of the next session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee

18. The Sub-Committee recommended that for its fourteenth session, to be held from 14 to 25 March 1977, priority be given to the following items:

1. Questions relating to remote sensing of the earth by satellites
2. Consideration and review of the United Nations programme on space applications
3. Consideration of the options relating to a possible United Nations conference on outer space matters.

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Assembly if it were incompatible with the requirements of those bodies, and it therefore requests the comments of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its sub-committees as well as any additional or alternative suggestions which it might wish to make in this connexion (A/AC.105/L.88).

- (v) Technical characteristics of systems providing communication and/or radiodetermination using satellite techniques for aircraft and/or ships

30. A note has been prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to draw the attention of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the existence of study programme 17A/8: "Technical characteristics of systems providing communication and/or radiodetermination using satellite techniques for aircraft and/or ships". (A/AC.105/L.89).

- (vi) Request for observer status for the International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

31. A letter dated 11 May 1976 from the President of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space requesting observer status for the International Astronautical Federation has been received and circulated to the Committee for action (A/AC.105/L.90).
