
**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space***Unedited transcript*541st Meeting

Monday, 13 June 2005, 3 p.m.

Vienna

Chairman: Mr. A. A. Abiodun (Nigeria)

The meeting was called to order at 3.13 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Distinguished delegates and representatives, good afternoon. I now declare open the 541st meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

This afternoon we will continue our consideration of agenda item 7, Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its Forty-Second Session, and agenda item 8, Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its Forty-Fourth Session.

Time permitting, we will also continue our consideration of agenda item 6, Implementation of the Recommendations of UNISPACE III.

Around 4.00 p.m. we will begin the Symposium on Space and Archaeology.

I would like to remind delegates that the Ad Hoc Expert Group studying the possibility of creating a disaster management international space coordination entity is currently holding its meeting in Room C0431 on the fourth floor of this very building.

The Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee is also holding its intersessional meeting in Room C0713. This intersessional meeting began this afternoon at 2.00 p.m.

Finally, the Working Group on Space Debris of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee is also currently holding its intersessional meeting in

Conference Room VII. That meeting began also at 2.00 p.m. this afternoon.

**Report of the Scientific and Technical
Subcommittee on its forty-second session (agenda
item 7)**

Distinguished delegates, I would now like to continue our consideration of agenda item 7, Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-second session.

And the first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of France, Mr. Trebaol. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. J.-Y. TREBAOL (France) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, first of all let me congratulate the members of the Subcommittee and His Excellency Mr. Dumitru-Dorin Prunariu for excellent work accomplished at the forty-second session.

Our delegation would like to particularly dwell on three issues: space debris mitigation, the opportunity to set up a disaster management international space coordination entity, and finally, the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

As regards the issue relating to space debris, our delegation welcomes the progress made at the time of the most recent session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the work currently ongoing within the framework of the Working Group meeting in the margins of this Committee. The objective of that Group is to develop high-level

In its resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that, beginning with its thirty-ninth session, the Committee would be provided with unedited transcripts in lieu of verbatim records. This record contains the texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages as transcribed from taped recordings. The transcripts have not been edited or revised.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week of the date of publication, to the Chief, Conference Management Service, Room D0708, United Nations Office at Vienna, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria. Corrections will be issued in a consolidated corrigendum.

recommendations based on the technical guidelines of the Space Debris Inter-Agency Coordination Committee, better known by the acronym IADC. These recommendations will be submitted to this Committee for approval. The resulting document should meet the requirements established last February. It will not constitute a binding legal norm of international law and, as you know, Mr. Chairman, that was one of the major concessions that my delegation made in the interest of consensus. It will not be, technically speaking, more stringent than the IADC directives. It will apply to the planning of missions and the use of newly-designed space objects and orbital phases and, if possible, those that already exist.

A joint proposal has been developed by the space agencies of the United Kingdom, the NSC, Germany, DLR, or France, CNES, and the European Space Agency ESA. This joint proposal establishes certain major principles to serve as a basis for any future document elaborated by the Committee. Other delegations have put forward proposals which are basically similar to the extent that they are all based on the Guidelines of IADC. The French delegation, therefore, that the Ad Hoc Working Group will conclude its work in a speedy fashion and will submit to the future session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee a draft document on space debris mitigation, as was envisaged at the forty-second session of the Subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation also welcomes the progress accomplished by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in its intersessional meetings, particularly the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on setting up an entity that would optimize space services towards the management of natural disasters. This work essentially focused on the positioning of the DMISCO entity, the services it could offer and the principles for its operation. Our delegation favours setting up such an entity on the basis of the general principles developed by Action Team Number 7 within the framework of the discussions on the implementation of recommendations of UNISPACE III and during the meetings of the Working Group. This entity will help fill in certain gaps that exist in the coordination of space services used for the management of natural disasters. It will supplement the mechanisms of the Space and Major Disasters Charter in the phases of prevention and anticipation on the one hand and rehabilitation on the other hand.

Talking about the position or status of this entity, my delegation is of the following opinion. In the interest of efficiency, it would seem to us counter-productive to set up a new organization in a sector

where international operators are already numerous. We would prefer placing such an entity within the United Nations system or as an entity attached to an existing international organization. Whatever the final position decided on, my delegation would like to emphasize the fact that setting this disaster management international space coordination entity should be within the context of the global work on strengthening the capacity of humankind for humanitarian activities.

Finally, concerning the work of the Working Group on Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. The French delegation is fundamentally in agreement with the preliminary list of objectives and themes for the Joint Workshop to be held with the IAEA in February of next year. However, we would like to express the wish that at its intersessional meeting held in the margins of this Committee, the Working Group might define the time to be allotted to each theme with a view to facilitating the selection of options for future cooperations between the Committee and the IAEA, our delegation would like to state that it favours option number one, that is work by the IAEA in close cooperation with the Committee on Outer Space. This would seem to us the most appropriate option, taking into account the respective competencies and procedures of these two organizations.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Trebaol, I thank you, the distinguished representative of France for your contribution to our agenda item number 7.

The next speaker on my list is Mr. Ouattara, the distinguished representative of Canada. Mr. Ouattara, you have the floor Sir.

Mr. T. OUATTARA (Canada): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Canada would like to make a statement on the COSPAS-SARSAT Programme which is part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

Mr. Chairman, imagine that a plane has crashed in the mountains, a ship has foundered at sea, or one has been hurt when hiking in the wilderness, you are in distress and you need help fast. Every hour counts if you are to come home alive. But rescuers must find you before they can help.

Mr. Chairman, in a country such as Canada, with our immense distances, rugged terrain and harsh climate, that can be difficult. Speed is vital for a successful rescue. Fortunately, space-age technology

is now your guardian, listening for your call. The COSPAS-SARSAT Programme can help locate people in trouble in isolated areas.

Mr. Chairman, Canada is a founding partner of COSPAS-SARSAT, an international satellite system that helps save lives by providing alert and location information to search and rescue services throughout the world. The system has helped save 14,000 lives since it began operations in 1982. More than 1,000 of them have been Canadians.

Canadian companies are still major equipment suppliers for the COSPAS-SARSAT system. The Local Users Terminals made in Canada currently operate on six continents. Canadian industry has also built 13 SAR repeaters, the design of which is being updated for launches after 2010.

Mr. Chairman, Canada was also a major player in the development of the 406 MHz geostationary satellite system, known as GEOSAR, which enhanced the initial LEOSAR system that COSPAS-SARSAT used in the 1990s. Currently, Canada is participating in the development of the new Galileo satellite system, which could further improve search and rescue for the twenty-first century. Research that was done in Canada over two decades ago continues to save lives today.

Mr. Chairman, Canada is pleased and happy to inform you that all the documents are now completed and signed for COSPAS-SARSAT to set up its headquarters in Montreal and its Secretariat will be relocated from London, United Kingdom, to Montreal in July/August this year 2005. This event will increase the participation of Canada to the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ouattara, thank you very much as the distinguished representative of Canada for that contribution to our agenda item number 7.

Distinguished delegates and representatives, that is the last inscription I have on agenda item number 7 for this afternoon.

Do I have any other delegation interested in taking the floor at this time on this agenda item?

Now I was supposed to close the list of speakers for this item this morning but unfortunately I had an emergency situation that I had to attend to so I

was not here when we adjourned and that statement was not made. So just to let you know that we are going to close the list of speakers on agenda item 7 this afternoon. So if we have any delegation wishing to speak, you either speak now or you let us know before the end of the day that you are going to speak tomorrow morning because tomorrow morning I think we should close. I have been advised by the Secretariat to use the word "suspend" not use the word "close".

OK, so we are going to suspend deliberation of agenda item 7 definitely tomorrow morning.

Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its forty-fourth session (agenda item 8)

If there is no other delegation wishing to take floor, distinguished delegates, I will now open our consideration of agenda item number 8, Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its Forty-Fourth session.

Before proceeding to the list of speakers for this afternoon, I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee that, as mentioned in the report of the Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee, Professor Sergio Marchisio, this morning, the Legal Subcommittee has recommended that this Committee, at this session, should invite the Scientific and Legal Subcommittees to consider the possibility of preparing a report on the technical characteristics of aerospace objects, in light of the current level of technological advancement and possible developments in the foreseeable future.

Can I take it, distinguished delegates, that this Committee now accepts and is agreeable to the suggestion and recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee on this subject?

I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States.

Mr. K. HODGKINS (United States of America): Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have just a point of clarification. If I remember correctly, the Legal Subcommittee was going to ask the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to consider preparing such a report. So the decision we are making today is whether we will pass that recommendation on to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Is that correct?

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you very much Sir for that clarification. Our Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee, do I take it that the distinguished representative of the United States is correct? OK. I

guess so. You are correct Sir. And, therefore, this Committee is taking the recommendation from the Legal Subcommittee and passing it to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to consider in its 2006 session. OK? So we are now agreeing that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should consider the request of the Legal Subcommittee to consider the possibility of preparing a report on the technical characteristics of aerospace objects in light of the current level of technological advancement and possible developments in the foreseeable future.

Decided.

In the meantime, distinguished delegates, there is no indication that any delegation wants to say anything else on agenda item number 8.

I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Brazil.

Mr. C. E. DA CUNHA OLIVEIRA (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just very briefly. I would like to react to the kind words expressed by the distinguished Ambassadors of Chile and Colombia on the Seminar held in Rio de Janeiro in November last year on international space law, as specifically on dissemination and development of international space law in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. That Seminar indeed offered significant opportunity, not only for the promotion of exchanges of views between experts of the region on questions of international space law, but also to promote a more clear view and understanding of the main challenges and questions related to the application or implementation of international space law and future developments in that area.

The Seminar had participation from various representatives and experts and, not only from Latin America and the Caribbean, also from other countries, Ukraine, France, The Netherlands, we had Professor Vladimir Kopal, who is present, Germany, the United States and Canada were also represented and my delegation would like to express thanks for the interest shown by participants and experts who attended and also for the support received from the Office for Outer Space Affairs, that was very important in helping the event be organized.

I would like to thank the delegation or the Government of Nigeria and wish you the best for the Seminar that will take place there in November.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Brazil for that acknowledgement from Chile and Colombia this morning on the success of the Workshop held in Brazil on space law.

Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor on agenda item number 8?

Please let me consult with the Secretariat for a second.

Distinguished delegates, according to the schedule of our work, we should finish our debate on the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as well as the Legal Subcommittee, tomorrow. Accordingly, I am going to equally close the register of speakers today for both the Legal as well as the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee statements. So delegations wishing to make statements tomorrow or later today, please let us know before the end of this afternoon's session.

So that is the end of our debate this afternoon on agenda item number 8 and we shall continue tomorrow with both agenda item number 7, as well as agenda item number 8.

Now give me a second. Distinguished delegates, in its resolution 59/116, that is the _____ (?) resolution, the General Assembly agreed that a symposium on space and archaeology should be held during the current session of the Committee. The Office for Outer Space Affairs, in close cooperation with UNESCO and the Institute for Global Mapping and Research of Austria, has organized this symposium.

Before inviting Mr. Hernández of UNESCO to chair the symposium, I would like to inform delegates of our schedule of work for tomorrow morning as follows.

We will meet promptly at 10.00 a.m. At that time, we will continue and hopefully suspend our consideration of agenda item 7, Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its Forty-Second Session, pending the reports of the Working Groups on Space Debris and the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space on their intersessional meetings.

We will also continue agenda item number 8, Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its Forty-Fourth Session, as well as agenda item number 6, Implementation of the Recommendations of UNISPACE III. I would like to draw the attention of delegates to agenda item number 6, in connection with

the fact that the Secretariat has informed me that it will circulate, through your pigeon holes, before the end of our work this afternoon, a number of Conference Room Papers. The first Conference Room Paper, CRP.11, is the Chair's proposal on how the Committee can contribute to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. And the second CRP, CRP.12, is the Secretariat's strategy to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as requested by the General Assembly.

Also tomorrow morning, the Working Groups on Space Debris and the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee will continue to hold their intersessional meetings. I understand that both groups will start their work at 9.00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Distinguished delegates, are there any questions or comments on this proposed schedule of work for tomorrow?

The United States.

Mr. K. HODGKINS (United States of America): Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have no objection to the schedule of work tomorrow. I had wanted to take some time to brief the Subcommittee and the Committee on the status of the work being conducted under Action Team 10 on GNSS and I can either do that this afternoon before we adjourn or tomorrow morning under agenda item 6, I think it is, I think it deals with implementation of UNISPACE III.

The CHAIRMAN: OK, I think, with the permission of the house and in order to make use of the time available to us, we are probably better off to do it this afternoon, as soon as I have finished my statement but before I adjourn for the presentation on Space and Archaeology.

Are there any comments on this schedule I have proposed for tomorrow but what I propose for tomorrow morning? And since I have the floor, let me also remind you that tomorrow afternoon it is our intention to take off agenda items numbers 9 and 10 and I will give you more details. You have the schedule of work. I think agenda item 9 deals with Spin-off Benefits of Space Technology: Review of Current Status, and agenda item 10 deals with Space and Society, and that is when we will be considering space and education.

Distinguished delegates, in order for you to prepare totally, I am preparing you not only for the morning but for the afternoon tomorrow. Tomorrow,

agenda items 9 and 10 will be opened for debate and we have only actually two sessions for that, tomorrow afternoon and Wednesday morning and these two items will be closed, not suspended, they will be closed on Wednesday morning. So if you want to make any statement, if it is not made by Wednesday morning, then it can be made next year at the forty-ninth session.

With that, before we adjourn, let me invite the distinguished representative of the United States to make his contribution on GNSS. You have the floor Sir.

Mr. K. HODGKINS (United States of America): Thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to brief the Committee on the status of the work to be undertaken under Action Team 10 dealing with GNSS and I am privileged to co-chair that Action Team along with a colleague, Mario Caparal(?), from the Italian Space Agency and over the past two years, we have made considerable progress in fulfilling the mandate of the Action Team. As many of you are aware, we issued a comprehensive report on GNSS and its utility, particularly through applications in the developing world and that that report was issued in hard copy as well as on a DVD. I think it is available online at the Office for Outer Space Affairs' website.

In addition to the report from the Action Team, the Action Team embarked on a, what I consider to be a particularly interesting endeavour, and that is to establish an International Committee on GNSS to promote the use of GNSS on a global basis and to facilitate the exchange of information. The Action Team and a sub-group of the Action Team have prepared a draft terms of reference for the international Committee on GNSS and we now are planning to have the first meeting of the ICG in December of this year hosted by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and chaired by the Director for the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

The ICG would be composed of current and future operators of global GNSS systems, as well as providers of augmentation service(?) systems and major international organizations and international professional societies with an interest in promoting the use of GNSS.

These potential members include the United States, India, China, Japan, Nigeria, the European Commission and Russia, as providers of global services, as well as augmentation services.

In addition to the nations and international organizations that are operating global GNSS and

augmentation systems, a number of international organizations have raised an interest in participating in the ICG. I will give you just a roster, a list here: the International Association of Geodesy, the International Association of Institutes of Navigation, the International Cartographic Association, the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, the International Federation of Surveyors, COSPAR, the International Scientific Council, as well as ICAO, IMO and ITU.

It is our intention that this initial meeting in December of these potential members will result in those members confirming their interest in organizing the ICG as well as in adopting the terms of reference for the ICG.

Mr. Chairman, this is an outstanding example of what has been accomplished under the auspices of UNISPACE III and the Committee. I can say that more than likely this initiative would never have come about without the advent of the Action Team and without the cooperation of the 30 or more countries and international organizations that participated in the Action Team. Then hoping that at this time next year, we will be able to report on the establishment of the ICG and also report on the work that we hope the Committee be able to undertake over the next two years.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for his contribution on the GNSS and the preparatory activities that are in progress. Two things, you laid emphasis on the role of the Action Team in getting this done and as all of us know, the brainchild behind the Action Teams is none other than our own distinguished Dr. Karl Doetsche of Canada. Karl, you see how continuously you become and indispensable too. Note it too, I am(?) going to use you in that way but you are a big asset to this Committee and we are grateful that initiative that has been driving the Action Team for the last three years.

Having said that, Mr. Ken Hodgkins, can I persuade you on behalf of the Committee to please transmit the finished text of your contribution to the Secretariat so that it can be reflected in the report of the forty-eighth session of our deliberation?

I know my UNESCO man is looking at me. The paper in front of me says you are coming here at 4.00 p.m. so I have 13 more minutes.

Before I invite the UNESCO man to take the floor and guide us through the afternoon on the Symposium that is about to begin, do you have any more comments?

I invite the distinguished representative of Austria.

OK, I am supposed to make this statement on behalf of Austria!

Mr. L. BECKEL (Austria): Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, on behalf of His Excellency Ambassador Walther Lichem, I may announce an invitation of the Austrian delegation to a Heurigen tonight at 7.00 p.m. at Hollgasse(?) Huber, you know this place I think already very well. _____ (*not clear*) the Austrian delegation invites you to its reception at the Heurigen. If you have any problems to get there, please contact me afterwards and I will give you the right direction. I think there is no direction how to reach it, usually _____ taxi. You should have this invitation in your documents.

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Austria for that statement and for that social event. I have been informed by the Secretariat that every delegation has a copy of this invitation in the pigeon holes so please make sure you get in the pigeon. And I think I understand it is the same place we have been to in the last two years. The Secretariat has a map in their head. They can guide you and, of course, our Austrian colleague can do the same.

With that statement, I need to vacate the floor.

I understand that the Ambassador of Chile has asked for the floor.

Mr. R. GONZALEZ ANINAT (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Thank you Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to ask. The reception in the Heurige, under what Action Team does that fall please?

The CHAIRMAN: That is very easy. It is the Action Team titled "Austrian Generosity Unlimited". OK? And we thank Austria, and I thank Austria on your behalf, for creating this Action Team which has also been in operation since Austria has been part and parcel of this Committee. Thank you.

This Action Team is not going to end. It is a continuous Action Team.

This meeting is adjourned and I will now invite Mr. Hernández to share this session for this afternoon and I have given you an additional 10 minutes.

The meeting closed at 3.49 p.m.