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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 3 July 1974, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. JANKOWITSCH

(Austria)

- General debate (continued)

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GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Mr. HUCKE (German Democratic Republic): The German Democratic Republic is in the favourable situation of having been nominated for membership in this Committee at a moment when a great number of evident results have been presented. The report so ably introduced by Mr. Turk on behalf of the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee gives eloquent proof of this.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to thank you and the representatives, on behalf of my delegation, for the friendly words of welcome to the new members of the Committee.

Since 1958 the German Democratic Republic has taken part in space research. The activities started with the optical survey of the orbit of the second artificial Soviet satellite Sputnik 2 and have been continued very intensely in the field of ionosphere research with the aid of the signals of the satellite Sputnik 3.

Since the foundation of the organization Intercosmos in 1967, the German Democratic Republic, together with the other socialist States, has participated in the programme for the peaceful exploration and use of the cosmic space. Thanks to the generous offer of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic has been in a position to participate actively in space research and to install measuring instruments for the purpose of research and use of satellites.

In the framework of Intercosmos 11 satellites with equipment from different socialist States have been launched up to now. The German Democratic Republic participated in seven satellites of this type, as well as in the launchings of two vertical rockets and several small meteorological rockets. The scientific background of this co-operation is the exploration of the physical qualities of the cosmic space close to earth. Problems of the earth's magnetic field, of the zone of radiation and of the influence of solar radiation on the different strata of the earth's atmosphere and its energy household were of special interest. Besides, meteorological data on the distribution and formation of clouds of our planet were of importance; global observations and continued control made an improvement of the weather service possible.

(Mr. HUCKE, German Democratic Republic)

With the satellites Intercosmos 1, Intercosmos 4, Intercosmos 7 and Intercosmos 11, a permanently completed series of satellites for solar research has been established. Its main goal was to research the active area of the sun as a source of the strongly variable short-wave ultra violet and radium radiation. The German Democratic Republic takes part in these explorations with several measuring units in the ultra violet area. These researches have led to improved pattern conceptions on dynamic regions on the sun.

(Mr. Hucke, German Democratic Republic)

The satellites Intercosmos 2, Intercosmos 8 and Intercosmos 10, as well as the rockets Vertical 1 and Vertical 2, served for examining plasma-parameters in the ionosphere and magnetosphere of the earth. The experiments supplied not only data on individual processes of the ionization of the atmosphere but also global surveys on the turn-over of energy of solar radiation in the earth's atmosphere. For the purpose of those experiments, the German Democratic Republic has developed and applied airborne instruments. Moreover, a depot of ground receiving sets has been established. It is applied for receiving and processing satellite signals. Among them there is a powerful receiving system for satellite weather imagery.

Realizing necessary developing works and elaborating legal fundamentals, the organization Intercosmos brought about the preconditions for creating the system Intersputnik. By signing the agreement on the foundation of the international system and of the organization for cosmic telecommunications, Intersputnik, the German Democratic Republic became a member of that international organization in 1972.

In the field of cosmic communications, Intercosmos deals with any questions concerning the permanent development and improvement of the cosmic transmission of information. For the purpose of participating in the exchange of information by telecommunication satellites -- telephone and teleprint communication, transmission of data, exchange of television and broadcast programmes -- a ground radio station will soon be established on the territory of the German Democratic Republic.

The first phase of space research within the framework of the co-operation Intercosmos served the purpose of acquiring and improving space technology. Besides the construction of sensors, important is the development of a complex telemetry system able to store the data accumulated in cosmic space, to codify them, to transmit them to the ground stations and to evaluate them by means of appropriate computer systems.

For the second phase, satellites are being projected which are in a position to pursue remote sensing of the earth by satellites. In applying space research technology for the benefit of humanity, the German Democratic Republic attaches extraordinarily high importance to the aimed employment of such satellites.

(Mr. Hucke, German Democratic Republic)

Those satellites are also important aids to the exploration of environmental pollution as well as to the development of methods aimed at protecting our living space.

In the brief span of its co-operation in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in its Sub-Committees and Working Groups, the German Democratic Republic has attached major importance to solution of the legal problems of outer-space activities within the framework of the basic principles of international law. Allow me, therefore, to comment on some subjects covered by the report of the Legal Sub-Committee.

According to General Assembly resolution 3182 (XXVIII), the Legal Sub-Committee must with priority deal with the Draft Treaty Relating to the Moon and the Draft Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, as well as with the principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct satellite television and broadcasting.

As far as the Draft Treaty Relating to the Moon is concerned, the German Democratic Republic proceeds from the fact that there is fundamental agreement that the moon and other celestial bodies must be used only for peaceful purposes and that the motivation and exercise of rights of sovereignty over them are excluded. The reaching of that agreement is, we think, a decisive positive basis for the early completion of the set of agreements. On the other hand, the session of the Legal Sub-Committee in Geneva has shown that there are difficulties regarding the regulation of the administration and exploitation of moon resources. But that is understandable enough because, for the time being, we cannot say that the technical and economic preconditions exist for such exploitation. The German Democratic Republic therefore holds the view that at present there is no practical and therefore no international necessity to concentrate the deliberations on the elaboration of an international régime of law concerning the administration and exploitation of moon resources.

The Draft Treaty Relating to the Moon is an important work, and there has already been considerable progress in its elaboration. My delegation expresses the hope that it will be possible within a reasonable time to find another acceptable solution to those problems that are still unsolved.

(Mr. Hücke, German Democratic Republic)

My delegation also welcomes the elaboration by the Legal Sub-Committee of the Draft Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. We are certain that the Convention will contribute to facilitating settlement of cases of loss which could possibly be caused by outer-space objects.

In respect of the problems involved in working out the principles for direct satellite television and broadcasting, the German Democratic Republic proceeds from the principle that this new television and broadcasting engineering must be used exclusively in the interests of peace, the reduction of international tensions and the development of friendly relations between peoples. Direct satellite television and broadcasting are, in our opinion, admissible only if the recipient State has expressly agreed to the television and radio reception. Television and radio transmissions by satellites without the agreement of the States concerned are both a violation of their sovereignty and interference in their internal affairs.

The German Democratic Republic therefore supports the draft convention submitted in 1972 by the Soviet Union which defines the aims and manner of those direct transmissions and which also provides for the responsibility under international law of those States violating the principle that direct transmissions by satellites must be put into effect only after agreement has been given by the recipient State.

(Mr. Hücke, German Democratic Republic)

At the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic stated that the activities of the Sub-Committee and its Working Group had been useful. The basis for the further work of the Sub-Committee should be the programme suggested in its final report. That programme sets the right crucial points and is oriented towards necessary works. In this connexion we would like to state that the further activities should be carried out in accordance with focal points in the main Committee and in the Sub-Committee and less in working groups. We hold that this guarantees greater effectiveness.

With regard to the problems of remote sensing of the earth by satellites, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic would like to refer to the fact that in the application of the new technology the interests of States are directly affected. We therefore support the proposal of both the Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee that the Legal Sub-Committee should devote itself with high priority to the politico-legal aspects of this new technology.

With regard to the United Nations programme for space applications for 1975, the German Democratic Republic agrees in principle with the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. We consider it important, however, to stress once again that increases in the budget are not the only way out in solving the problems that the United Nations Expert is facing. The focal point in the elaboration of future programmes has to be the rational and effective employment of means. The members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be given a stronger influence in the elaboration by the earliest possible presentation.

Those are the first thoughts of my delegation on the work that we have to accomplish. During the discussion of the various items of the agenda, my delegation will comment again on the problems relevant to them.

Mr. EL-ZOEBY (Egypt): I should like at the outset to join you, Mr. Chairman, and other delegations and extend my delegation's warmest welcome to the nine new members of this Committee who are attending this session for the first time. We express our firm conviction that they will add a valuable contribution to our work. We already witnessed the beginning of that contribution during the last sessions of the Working Group on Remote Sensing and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

I should also like to express our sincere congratulations to the delegations of those countries which during the last year have conducted successful activities in outer space.

We have always welcomed the growing co-operation among space Powers in exploring outer space, as well as their co-operation with non-space Powers. We firmly believe that such international co-operation is one of the important assets in consolidating international political détente, thus serving the cause of peace.

Another cause which is very closely related to the cause of peace and which can also be served through co-operation in outer-space activities is the cause of development. There is no doubt any more about the important role that space technology can play in solving problems of development in developing countries. That will be possible only after achieving a certain degree of awareness of that role and having the necessary technological base through training and education. In that respect and with all due appreciation and gratitude for the efforts made either on bilateral bases or within the United Nations system, we still feel, among other developing countries, that an additional serious effort should be made.

By way of example, we attach great importance to the expansion of the United Nations programme on space applications techniques. We certainly agree with views expressed here by some delegations concerning the importance of rational utilization of the resources assigned to that programme, however, we fail to see the possibility of developing a worth-while programme in that area - not to speak about an expanded programme -- within the sadly limited funds assigned to it at present.

As for choosing the most meaningful projects and fields of activities of that programme, my delegation was glad to be one of those which supported and co-sponsored the idea of initiating a dialogue with the developing countries in order further to define areas of interest and needs of those countries in the field of space applications. We hope that the questionnaire which is about to be finalized will be unanimously adopted by this Committee.

With regard to remote sensing of the earth by satellites -- in which my country has taken particular interest -- my delegation has, in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, supported the idea of recommending that studies be commissioned on the organizational and financial requirements for the establishment of an international remote sensing data centre under United Nations auspices. We hope that while those aspects of remote sensing of the earth by satellites are studied further, a higher degree of priority can be given to the consideration of remote sensing and its legal implications in the Legal Sub-Committee.

My delegation welcomes the important step taken in the Legal Sub-Committee in reaching agreement during its last session on the text of the Convention on Registration, which is an important step to complement the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. I would like to express my delegation's congratulations to the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee and to the Chairman of its Working Group 2 for the great efforts they have made in preparing that draft Convention.

With regarding to the reconvening of working groups in the future, it is my delegation's opinion that the Committee should adopt a flexible policy. We also see merit in the view expressed here by some delegations concerning the possibility of extending the period of meetings of Sub Committees in case the Committee decides not to reconvene any of the working groups in 1975.

Mr. Chairman, I have wished to make a brief statement as I know that you have a long list of speakers. I shall conclude by expressing my delegation's pleasure at participating in the work of this session under your very well-known and able chairmanship.

Mr. LINDENBERG SETTE (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Brazil is very pleased to participate in the seventeenth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space under your already proven and able leadership.

Your opening statement, Sir, gave us an accurate picture of the latest developments in the field of the peaceful utilization of outer space. Meeting the challenge of keeping up with the fast pace of current achievements in outer space, our Committee and its subsidiary bodies, for their part, have chalked up an impressive record of achievements to display in the current year.

In fact, this may well have been the most active year in the Committee's history, its subsidiary bodies having, I might add, produced some very positive results. Not that I intend at this point to touch upon all aspects of their work. My delegation will have the occasion to present its detailed points of view when specific questions are discussed in the course of the present meeting. My general statement today is intended to outline briefly my Government's position on what we consider to be the most salient and relevant aspects of our work both in the legal and in the scientific areas.

I think that we are all in accord in extending our warmest congratulations to the Legal Sub-Committee for the successful completion of the registration convention. Thanks to the meritorious spirit of understanding and compromise prevailing at the last session of the Sub-Committee in Geneva, it will now be possible for the Committee to present to the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly a final text of this much needed convention. Although my delegation would have preferred a text containing more precise and mandatory provisions on marking --- which we have always considered an indispensable feature of the convention --- we were able to go along with the compromise formula on the understanding that questions related to the identification of space objects will be kept under constant review. We certainly consider the text as finally approved in the Legal Sub-Committee to be a positive step towards our ultimate goal of covering the whole range of space activities with precise and interconnected binding legal norms.

While we are happy with the completion of the registration convention, we certainly regret the fact that the Legal Sub-Committee could not finalize the moon text. Unfortunately, there are still some strongly held positions against the elaboration of norms on the legal status of the natural resources of the moon

(Mr. Lindenberg Sette, Brazil)

and other celestial bodies. It has been and continues to be the considered stand of my delegation that without such norms, and in particular without the declaration of the natural resources of the moon as the common heritage of mankind, no moon treaty would make sense at this stage. In fact, if one takes the text as it now stands without the provisions relating to natural resources, progress over already existing outer space instruments is barely discernible; in my delegation's view, the few advances, if any, incorporated into the text are hardly likely to justify the elaboration of an autonomous international agreement. It is thus our belief that the Committee should proceed with the utmost caution in this matter. I stress that there should be no undue haste in finalizing a text until it becomes clear that it embodies a common denominator of the views held by all delegations.

Concerning questions related to direct broadcast by satellites, my delegation is definitely encouraged by the fact that the Legal Sub-Committee has finally --- albeit quite timidly --- reached the drafting stage. One factor in particular made this possible --- the very useful work performed by the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites in March. By exploring and debating the broad spectrum of political, legal and technical questions under its mandate the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites was able to lay solid foundations for the Legal Sub-Committee's work. It is my delegation's hope that the brackets that still clutter up the texts discussed in Geneva will soon be eliminated and that further drafting will shortly be attempted and our Committee will be in a position to fulfil its mandate as laid down in resolution 3182 (XXVIII).

In the view of my delegation, however, the most urgent task before us in the legal area is perforce the elaboration of a binding, juridical framework for activities of remote sensing of natural resources of the earth by satellites. I say this not only on the strength of the intrinsic importance and clear international legal implications of such activities but also because it cannot be denied that remote sensing is already a reality, the technical parameters of which are sufficiently known to the international community, while its economic and political connotations are becoming increasingly evident. As an adequate way of demonstrating its concern with the matter of remote sensing, my Government

(Mr. Lindenberg Sette, Brazil)

With reference to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, as reviewed in the aforementioned report, we certainly go along with commending the Expert's work, which encountered an exceedingly positive reaction from Member States, judging by the numerous panels, seminars and training workshops held in both developing and developed countries. In this context we are deeply grateful to the initiatives undertaken by Mr. Murthy, who, with very scarce financial resources, has been able to carry out the Programme as endorsed by the Sub-Committee. We certainly hope that the financial restraints which limit the scope of United Nations work in this field will be alleviated and that the objections of certain delegations to the granting of more funds to the Expert can be overcome. A small but significant contribution on the part of Brazil to this effort towards wider dissemination of the benefits of space application will be its hosting of an interregional seminar on remote sensing applications to cartography, to be held early in November of this year in Sao José dos Campos.

In relation to the proposal our delegation had the honour of cosponsoring for a questionnaire on the needs of developing countries for assistance in the field of practical applications for space technology, we feel that, whatever the form in which it is eventually presented, it can certainly prove to be an indispensable tool in drawing up the future framework of the United Nations Space Applications Programme.

One aspect of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's report has particularly drawn our attention, and that is the close scrutiny it gives to its programme for future work.

Our delegation cannot but concur with the views expressed in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's report regarding the proliferation in the creation of working groups. Should the creation of technical working groups be of an indispensable nature, utmost care should be exercised to prevent them from duplicating the work of the parent body. They should, in any case, for reasons of economy and in order to facilitate attendance by developing countries, be held concurrently with the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

Our delegation anticipates that the future work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee will concentrate more and more on the consideration of

(Mr. Lindenberg Sette, Brazil)

the United Nations programme on space applications. In this sense, it welcomes the recommendation that the Sub-Committee's twelfth session should give priority to this question.

Those are the brief observations my delegation judges opportune to make at this stage. Let me conclude by expressing the hope that productive results will be forthcoming from the present session so that we may be in a position to give the whole membership of the United Nations, as represented in the General Assembly, an adequate measure of the growing importance of international co-operation in the field of Outer Space as promoted and co-ordinated in our Committee.

