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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.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. DATCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): Our delegation and I personally are happy to see you as Chairman of this important Committee of the General Assembly. We are especially pleased because you are the representative of a friendly country, Poland, with which Romania is maintaining fraternal relations whose most eloquent expression has been the meeting and the very fruitful talks held recently at Bucharest between the leaders of our countries Mr. Ceaucescu and Mr. Gierek. You may count upon the unqualified support of the Romanian dèlegation in the fulfilment of the difficult and important tasks entrusted to you.

Before submitting a few comments of my delegation on the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, I should like to express our appreciation for the statement made here by the Chairman of the Committee, our friend Ambassador Peter Jankowitsch. We wish to thank him on this occasion also for the interest he has shown in the activities of the United Nations in the field of outer space as well as for the spirit of initiative that he has always demonstrated at the head of the Committee. For me personally it is a pleasure to be able to be one of the officers of the Committee working with the distinguished Ambassador Mr. Jankowitsch.

Mr. Chairman, as has been pointed out by previous speakers, the past year was marked by notable achievements both in the scientific and in the technical field, and also as regards the application of space technology to various fields of human activity. This ought to stimulate the elaboration of the legal instruments which govern the individual behaviour of States as well as co-operation between them.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

My delegation has taken note with satisfaction of the progress achieved by the Legal Sub-Committee in the elaboration of international instruments designed to regulate activity in this field.

Nevertheless it seems to us useful to draw attention to the fact that, in spite of the progress accomplished, further work on the instruments under consideration is blocked by the existence of differing opinions upon fundamental questions raised in the preparation of such legislation. Let us take up for instance the question entitled "Elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting". This question has been on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee for a number of years. To be sure at the last session the working group of the Sub-Committee succeeded in formulating nine principles but we have to recognize that the working group has not yet really seriously come to grips with the essential questions, namely the principle of consent and participation and the content of programmes and illicit transmissions. In this connexion, my delegation considers that we must elaborate principles which will truly be capable of guaranteeing the sovereign rights of the States covered by these transmissions, and promcte friendship and understanding between peoples.

Some believe that absolute freedom should be given in regard to direct television transmissions, restrictions being then imposed solely by the State which authorizes the transmissions. That would mean ignoring the rights of the State whose territory is covered by such transmissions. We believe that it is precisely the State covered by such transmissions which is the most directly concerned in the application of article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits propaganda for war as well as any advocacy of national and racial hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, because the effects of such transmissions will be felt upon its own territory. In that case, why should we give this right to the State of the territory from which the transmissions originate and deny that right to the State affected.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

I should like to make it clear in this connexion that we do not conceive of the proposed regulation as a restriction to extensive utilization of this technique; rather we view it as a means of safeguarding the interests of all States without distinction and of promoting international co-operation, with beneficial effects for all States. A similar situation exists with regard to the elaboration of principles relating to remote sensing of the earth. As can be seen from the report, we have not yet reached the stage of drafting texts dealing with certain fundamental questions such as prior consent, access to data and the information obtained, especially in regard to the State observed.

We believe that any regulation of remote sensing should proceed from the principle of respect for the sovereignty of States, especially in regard to the natural resources in their territories and information concerning such resources. At the same time, this regulation should encourage international co-operation in order to promote optimum exploitation of remote sensing so as to make it possible for all countries, and particularly developing countries, to benefit from it.

With regard to the draft treaty on the moon, we continue to believe that the only means of promoting international co-operation is to proclaim that the moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind and to set up an international régime for the exploitation of these resources once that becomes possible. We believe that it is still possible to complete our work on the draft treaty on the moon. In order to do this it is necessary to understand the position and take into account the interests of all the States concerned and seek out formulas which would be generally acceptable, in a spirit of constructive compromise.

We believe that in the scientific and technical field the Committee should keep pace and associate itself with the efforts to set up a new international economic order based on the idea of equity and justice and aimed at more rational utilization of the resources existing on this planet. The disparities in regard to the present scientific and technical resources, the limited resources that the majority of States have in this respect are an obstacle to the implementation of the intellectual and material potential of mankind.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

On the other hand continuous scientific and technical progress as well as the recent changes in international relations give our Organization and, of course, the Committee on Outer Space new responsibilities and tasks. In this connexion the Chairman of the Committee on Outer Space a year ago raised the question of the use of space techniques for the development of solar energy. Other applications of space technology, such as remote sensing, are developing rapidly. The Committee on Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should intensify their activities concerning the practical applications of space technology. We believe that the activities of the Committee and its sub-committees will be finally assessed on the basis of the concrete, practical and material contribution they make to the economic and social development of the countries concerned.

It is in this spirit that my delegation considers that it would be appropriate and indeed necessary to carry out, in the framework of an international conference, a global evaluation of the results achieved and of the potential in the field of the application of space technology for the purpose of drawing up an integrated plan for universal co-operation. We do not conceive of this conference as a purely scientific debate but rather as a meeting oriented towards action, whose result would be the adoption of a plan of concrete measures and recommendations addressed to States and to all the specialized agencies. My delegation wishes to draw attention to the tireless efforts made by the Outer Space Affairs Division of the Secretariat for the purpose of elaborating and implementing the programme for the application of space technology. I should like to congratulate the Division especially for having succeeded in organizing a large number of activities so effectively while spending so little money. We have stated as much in the past and I wish to repeat it today, that the present United Nations programme for the application of space technology does not correspond to present and future needs, in particular of the developing countries.

The future programmes of the United Nations in this field will have to be based on the real needs of the developing countries and should especially be designed to give these countries technical assistance and to provide them with facilities for training in the field of the application of space technology, including remote sensing. It is obvious that without financial support on a larger scale than at present it will hardly be possible to reach these goals.

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

The peaceful uses of outer space are one of the fields of human activity whose potential will be applied profitably only as a result of extensive international co-operation. Accordingly, our primary concern here at the United Nations should be to ensure that all the countries of the world take an active part in this co-operation and benefit from its results. To be sure, we are still far from the time when every country will be able to send its own astronauts on space missions, but I think that by developing international co-operation it will be possible for space missions henceforward to bring through the universe the message of a world united by common aspirations and a common destiny.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to assure the distinguished representative of Romania and Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Ambassador Datcu that I appreciate very much his kind reference to the close relations of friendship existing between our countries and for his words addressed to me personally. Also I should like to thank him for his co-operation in being in his place punctually at 10.30 and being ready to speak. Unfortunately, this virtue of punctuality is still rather rare but let us hope that it will become universal as the work of this Committee progresses.

Mr. AL-IMAM (Kuwait): As I am taking the floor for the first time, may I take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your election to your high office. We believe that your election augurs well for the work of this Committee. We would also like to extend our warm congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur.

Activities in space and outer space are increasingly capturing the attention of the world. Though the most spectacular exploits belong to highly industrialized countries with outstanding technological capabilities, it is a cause of great satisfaction to note that a few developing countries are entering this field gradually and on a modest scale. It is also heartening to note that in space activities there is an ever-expanding room for co-operation between developing and developed countries of which some tangible beginnings are already in sight.

It is a moot question whether law should come first or whether activities should expand widely before the law-giver attempts to solve the numerous problems raised. My delegation believes that the two can go hand in hand. The necessary machinery already exists in the form of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary organs.

If we were to adopt a first-things-first approach, we would whole-heartedly espouse the call for the definition and the delimitation of outer space. It is true that some legal régimes have been formulated without agreeing first on specific boundaries. The example of the régime for the area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction in the law of the sea is a case in point. However, even in the Law of the Sea Conference, it is becoming increasingly clear that it may not be wise to delay the delimitation of the area while the creeping jurisdiction of coastal States is making its presence felt more and more.

We are aware that the question of the lower boundary of outer space, where it should be placed, and whether it should be defined in legal terms, has been repeatedly discussed in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. However, we do not understand why it should be so difficult to reach a final decision on this matter. The question of where the lower boundary of outer space should be placed should be a factual matter based on scientific data. Neutral and disinterested scientific institutes should be able to provide scientific data which should constitute the basis of constructive discussion. For instance, we are aware that according to the investigation of an ad hoc working party of

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COSPAR the lowest altitude at which artificial satellites can still move freely without rapidly being forced down to earth by air-drag has been established at approximately 130 kilometres for satellites in circular orbits. It has also been revealed by the same source that for satellites in very elongated elliptical orbits this height is lower, at approximately 100 kilometres. On the basis of this finding, COSPAR has recommended placing the lower boundary of outer space at an altitude of 100 kilometres. Nobody is saying that this data should be accepted as being axiomatic. We, however, believe that COSPAR has made a valuable contribution in this respect, which should serve as an incentive for the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to pursue this matter further and investigate all scientific data pertaining to this issue. Unless the question of the delimitation of outer space is settled in the near future, States and particularly those active in outer space, may be tempted to establish a creeping jurisdiction in outer space which will undermine the freedom of outer space, its free use and exploration. However, agreement on the delimitation of outer space should be of great assistance to the task of formulating a legal definition of space.

It is a cause of great regret that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has failed to reach agreement on a draft treaty relating to the moon. The obstacle, as usual, is avarice, at a time when such valuable resources as may exist in the moon may be out of the reach of all States, even the most industrially advanced States. It is difficult to see why the resources of the moon like the resources of the sea in the area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, should not be declared the common heritage of mankind. We wonder on what basis would any State claim jurisdiction over the resources of the moon. Is it a right of first discovery, or conquest, or creating a condominium on the surface of the moon for countries who are pioneers in outer space. The concept of the common heritage of mankind has proved to be an effective tool for reconciling the ambitions of the State acting in its own self-interest with the common good. It is also a measure to prevent conflict between States with advanced technologies, and it can provide additional resources to bridge the ever-widening gap between the developed and developing countries. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate once more its conviction that a régime should be established for outer space and other celestial bodies and that an appropriate international authority should, in due course, be entrusted with the task of exploiting its natural resources for the benefit of mankind as a whole, taking into account the interests and needs of the developing countries. It is pertinent to note in this respect that the Declaration

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of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploitation and Use of Outer Space (resolution 1962 (XVIII)) provided that outer space and celestial bodies are not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is duty-bound to resolve the impasse over the natural resources of the moon in conformity with the said Declaration of Legal Principles.

We are in favour of convening a conference on space applications when the time is ripe for it. The conference can be useful if and when the developing countries feel that they are adequately prepared to reap the maximum benefits from it. The longer the period of preparation, the more successful the conference will be.

The main task before us is to study the contribution that space technology can make to the acceleration of the pace of economic and social development in the developing countries. At the present time the benefits of remote sensing are open only to a few technically advanced nations. Space technology must be used to provide new technical solutions to the problems which beset developing nations.

It is true that remote sensing, which implies the acquisition of information by an information-gathering device not in intimate contact and without the knowledge of the subject under investigation, may raise serious legal and even political questions. However, these can be solved because they are outweighed by the enormous benefits that can be derived from the acquisition of data on the earth's resources and using this new technology to solve economic problems in a novel and imaginative manner. Remote sensing techniques should be used in the service of the developing countries in a variety of disciplines such as agriculture and forestry, geology, hydrology and pollution control. It is particularly important to determine the land's capacity and potential in developing countries many of which are suffering from drought and crop failures. Hydrological studies should ensure optimum utilization of scarce water resources which should be used to serve industrial and agricultural needs and to create electric energy. Remote sensing should also be used to discover mineral resources which are the key to industrialization in developing countries. It has been aptly said in a study prepared by the Secretariat: "The question is not whether

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developing countries can afford the peaceful uses of outer space, rather, it is whether they can afford to ignore them."

It can thus be seen that this new type of technology offers new vistas for international co-operation. It is a test for the good will of technically advanced countries who can seriously engage in all phases for the transfer of this new type of technology to the developing countries. We would like such assistance to be without strings attached and preferably through programmes organized under the aegis of the United Nations. Such co-operation already exists on selective bases bilaterally.

(Mr. Al-Imam, Kuwait)

The developing countries would also have to formulate national plans for the use of space technology in the survey of their natural resources and in their economic development planning.

We believe that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is making a good start in formulating principles relating to the objectives of remote sensing, to the applicability of international law, to international co-operation and participation, to the protection of the marine environment and to the provision of technical assistance. A key provision should be the prohibition of the use of data and information to the detriment of other States. We believe that prior consent should be required for a launching State to conduct remote sensing over the territory of another State. Moreover, States obtaining data concerning the territory of a sensed State and with its consent should respect the confidentiality of such information which should be placed at the disposal of the sensed State and not revealed or disseminated without its previous consent. We are eager to secure the important benefits of remote sensing from space for all without in any sense violating the sovereignty of the sensed State and while establishing safeguards against possible misuse of information collected by means of remote sensing. We are confident that with goodwill the full potential of space technology can be utilized on the basis of international co-operation while safeguarding the sovereignty and fundamental rights of all States.

In conclusion, may I say that the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is steadily gaining in importance. We hope that the future work of the Committee will be commensurate with its increasing burdens. Moreover, the United Nations as a whole is called upon to undertake wider organizational activities, especially in the area of remote sensing by satellites, in a manner that will promote the interests of the developing countries.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Kuwait for the kind words he addressed to the officers of the Committee and to me personally.

Mr. PAWLAK (Poland): May I on behalf of the Polish delegation reiterate our previously expressed satisfaction that once again the first items to be

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considered by us are those dealing with international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Indeed, they mark a good starting point in the work of this most important political Committee. For many years now the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees have been doing their most constructive work by developing standards of harmonious international co-operation in the exploration of outer space and drafting international rules of the law of outer space. Functioning as they do on the basis of consensus and in an evident spirit of mutual understanding, both the Committee and its subsidiary bodies might well be taken as an example of properly putting into action the inspiring goals of the United Nations, as laid down in the Charter.

In this connexion I wish to congratulate Ambassador Jankowitsch of Austria, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, for his very lucid presentation of the report. I am very pleased to observe that the Committee is continuing to greatly benefit from his varied experience.

Every passing year offers new successes in man's conquest of outer space. In the technical and scientific field, the last several months alone brought spectacular ventures by the Soviet Union and the United States in conquering the planets of Venus and Mars, as well as expanding their explorations of the moon and the outer space at large. The Polish delegation congratulates the delegations of the Soviet Union and the United States on these important achievements.

There is growing co-operation in this area on both bilateral and multilateral planes. We of Poland and other socialist countries have also made our concrete contribution to this cause of international co-operation by having concluded, last July, an Agreement on Co-operation in the Exploration and the Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes. The agreement provides, inter alia, that citizens of the socialist countries will soon be included in the crews of Soviet space-craft and space stations. The significance of that agreement, be it scientific, political or otherwise, is indeed self-evident.

In assessing the United Nations accomplishments of the past year, my delegation believes that they have no doubt been highlighted by the entry into force of the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, which became effective on 15 September 1976. The Convention is a product of laborious work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in earlier years; along with

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its other efforts, it represents a commendable accomplishment in the peaceful exploration of outer space.

It is encouraging to note that we have been able to formulate nine draft principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. It seems to my delegation that the new international convention on this important subject, initiated as it was by the Soviet Union, is almost at hand, provided the Committee resolves the divergencies of opinion on the principles of consent and participation. We regard these principles as ones of universal importance, since we believe that the international community cannot let this important instrument of scientific and human progress be misused for purposes contrary to the principles of national sovereignty and peaceful coexistence of various States. The cultural environment of nations, like the natural biological environment, require its own protection from hatred, abuse and discrimination.

For those reasons and to overcome the different opinions concerning the principles of consent and participation, the Polish delegation to the Legal Sub-Committee, which convened last May in Geneva, put forward a compromise formula which, we hope, will reconcile all the respective positions. We welcome the support for the proposal, expressed during the last session of the Committee and trust that the ideas expressed in it will have a positive impact on the work of both the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee, in the form of a prompt and final elaboration of the principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3234 (XXIX) and 3388 (XXX).

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

We agree that progress in this direction would enhance the relevant provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. But let us not forget at the same time that the very same Act, which can only be effective if it is implemented in its undisputed entirety, opens up a decalogue of principles guiding relations among participating States, of which sovereign equality and respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty represent the first such principle. We earnestly hope that all States will in this spirit participate in the work of the Legal Sub-Committee in 1977.

The period covered by the report under discussion was the second year of the Committee's detailed work on the very important item relating to the legal implications of earth resources surveying by remote sensing satellites, as requested by General Assembly resolution 3388 (XXX) of 18 November 1975. Working Group III, established for this purpose by the Legal Sub-Committee, has succeeded in formulating texts of five draft principles and identifying three new common elements, referred to in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the report of the Working Group. The Polish delegation welcomes the high priority accorded to the work on the legal implications of remote sensing. The timely initiative of the delegation of Mongolia, to the effect that the surveying States must respect the sovereign right of the surveyed State over its natural resources and its sovereign right to dispose of the information gathered by means of remote sensing, has proved especially valuable.

The draft treaty on the moon seems to be the most complex issue before the Committee. Yet we believe that further determined efforts should be made in the spirit of compromise and accommodation to finalize this draft treaty, as indicated in paragraph 17 of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space before us.

The Polish delegation also deems it proper at this stage to put on record its appreciation of the work accomplished by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the scientific and technical field, with a view to wider dissemination of information available as a result of new technological progress.

In this respect, we support the co-ordinating role of the United Nations in the use of future systems and satellite data, which could indeed become an integral part of national economic development and planning activities. Because of their legal, organizational and technical implications, involving the access of States

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to data on their own territories, as well as the availability of such data to other States, we think it useful carefully to review the questions relating to the dissemination of data. It was rightly stressed in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, during its recent session in Geneva, that every State had the sovereign right to control the dissemination of data pertaining to its own resources and should therefore be fully entitled to express consent on the use of such data by other States. We are thus in agreement with the view that only information and data of a general nature should be disseminated without prior consent of the State concerned.

With respect to the United Nations programme on space application, as set out in paragraphs 44 to 50 of the report of the Committee, we endorse the relevant recommendations, in the conviction that, within the existing and approved finances, it will be further improved and expanded, both in content and in scope.

We likewise support the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, contained in paragraph 103 of its report, and in particular the request to the United Nations Secretariat to prepare a study in depth on the question of convening a United Nations conference on space matters. Meanwhile, there is merit in including questions of space technology in the agenda of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Science and Technology.

Our whole-hearted support for the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space remains linked with the hopes we hold that it should play an ever more constructive role as a central co-ordinator and pivotal organ in the field of the peaceful utilization of outer space. It should actually be a body able to formulate appropriate policy directives for the organs and organizations concerned. After all, it is precisely the Committee's endeavours that have greatly facilitated peaceful international co-operation in outer space, so clearly exemplified by the joint Soviet-American Soyuz-Apollo flight last year.

Poland -- although not a space Power -- will continue to play its role in international space activity. We take active part in the Interkosmos and Intersputnik programmes by providing, among other things, tracking facilities and scientific instruments for satellites, concentrating on space meteorology, physics, biology and medicine, as well as satellite geodesy and communications.

(Mr. Pawlak, Poland)

May I emphasize in conclusion that, in the view of the Polish delegation, the programme on the further development of international law of outer space should be pursued vigorously, with priority given to the treaty relating to the moon and the legal regulation of activities in the field of direct television broadcasting.

Guided by this conviction, my delegation will continue to provide its fullest support to United Nations efforts in this field.

Mr. THUNGON (India): Mr. Chairman, the Indian delegation is pleased to join other delegations in congratulating you warmly on your election as Chairman of this Committee. We are convinced that under your experienced and skilful leadership we will achieve positive results. I would like to assure you and other officers of the Committee of our full co-operation in the work of the Committee.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Ambassador Jankowitsch of Austria, Chairman of the Outer Space Committee, for the splendid manner in which he has conducted the work of the Committee. The Committee has benefited a great deal from his wise and able guidance and has made steady progress in its work. I should like to thank him also for his lucid presentation of the report of the Committee. Our thanks are also due to the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees.

The Government of India attaches great importance to outer space affairs and in particular to United Nations activities in this field. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) which executes the Indian Government space programmes is responsible for the development of space science and technology and space applications. To carry out these functions, it has established three centres. The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) has been set up to undertake research and development work in space technology, and is presently engaged in the development of space systems for various kinds of sounding rockets and satellites. The Sriharikota Range in the State of Andhra Pradesh is being developed as a satellite launching station with facilities for tracking, telemetry and data acquisition. The Space Applications Centre at Ahmedabad is currently engaged in application projects and research and development in the areas of satellite communication and broadcasting, remote sensing and satellite-based meteorology and satellite geodesy.

As India is a developing country, the principal objective of our space programme has been to exploit space technology for national development in the field of mass communication, weather studies including early warning of storms and long-range weather forecasting, search and management of national resources, food production and management, and surveys of earth, hydrologic and oceanographic resources etc. Before addressing myself to the major topics in the report of the Committee, I would like to give a brief review of the space

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activities conducted by my country during last year -- activities which to a considerable extent fall within the category of international co-operation.

I would like to make specific mention of two of our important space programmes, namely the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and the programme of launching of our artificial earth satellites. The SITE programme, which was started by us using the United States ATS-6 satellite on 1 August 1975, successfully ended on 31 July 1976. This programme was conducted in six of our states and each state had about 400 direct reception sets.

The general objective of the SITE experiment was to gain experience in the development, testing and management of a satellite-based instructional television system, particularly in rural areas, and to explore potential values of the satellite technology in the rapid development of effective mass communication. The programmes included information on agriculture, animal husbandry, health and hygiene, national integration and population control, besides special programmes for school audiences. Our Government is most grateful to the United States for assistance in this regard. The Indian delegation would also like to thank UNDP, which provided the necessary assistance for expansion and modification of the Experimental Satellite Communication Earth Station at Ahmedabad to enable it to serve as the prime earth station for SITE, and for their assistance in setting up of a TV studio and transmitter unit for this purpose.

Though the programme had to be temporarily suspended, the Government of India is making every effort to restore it at an early date. In the first phase TV transmission will be provided to about 40 per cent of the SITE villages, and for this purpose four low-power and two high-power transmitters are proposed to be installed very soon. In this connexion, I am happy to mention that India conducted, with the assistance of United Nations and UNESCO, a SITE winter school between 16 and 28 January 1976, during which a group of 17 experts from developing countries visited India to obtain first-hand information regarding various aspects of this experiment.

As the Committee is aware, India had launched its first artificial earth satellite in April 1975 with the assistance provided by the Government of the USSR. That satellite has been transmitting useful data which are being

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continuously analysed. It also enabled us to improve the technology of design and fabrication in that field. It is now proposed that the second Indian satellite, wholly designed and fabricated in India, will be launched from the Soviet Union in 1977-78. That satellite will primarily be an earth observation satellite. It will carry TV cameras and microwave radio meters as the two major sensers. It is our hope that this experiment will give us the capability of solving problems associated with the setting up of an operational satellite-based remote sensing system.

India has space collaboration arrangements in a number of fields and with a number of countries. I have just referred to our collaboration with the USSR in launching of our satellites. There has also been an ongoing co-operative programme, since 1970, between ISRO and the Hydrometeorological Services of the USSR for meteorological investigations. ISRO and the USSR Academy of Sciences have also agreed to establish a satellite observation and tracking station in India. Similarly, we are carrying out a number of collaborative experiments with NASA and, according to an arrangement between ISRO and NASA, data collected by NASA earth resources survey satellite LANDSAT will be made available to India. We have space collaboration arrangements also with France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom.

A number of our engineers and scientists are receiving training in various fields in French space research establishments and, under the terms of a co-operative agreement, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will fabricate and supply certain items needed for the French space programme. Similarly, a number of our space engineers who were sent for training in the West German Space Agency in July 1973, have continued to receive training there. The collaboration with the United Kingdom has been in the joint venture for launching rockets from the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station for the study of the upper atmosphere. Our Government is grateful for the assistance received from the space agencies of all these countries. We are also grateful to the United Nations for its continued sponsorship of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station.

(Mr. Thungon, India)

After this brief report on some of our space activities, I would like to comment on the report of the Committee presented at this session. Before doing so, I wish to thank Ambassador Wyzner of Poland, the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, and Professor Carver, the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, for their experienced guidance and achievements. Both the Sub-Committees have made some progress during the last year.

(Mr. Thungon, India)

The most significant progress made so far has been in the elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting. The Working Group of the Legal Sub-Committee has successfully formulated nine principles which relate to purposes and objectives, applicability of the international law, rights and benefits, international co-operation, State responsibility, duty and right to consult, peaceful settlement of disputes, copyright and neighbouring rights, and notification to the United Nations. There are still a few substantive issues such as the principles of prior consent and participation, programme content and unlawful broadcasts on which various delegations have divergent views. However, our delegation is hopeful that they will be satisfactorily resolved at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee.

Some progress has also been made in the item relating to legal implications of earth resources surveyed by remote-sensing satellites. Working Group III which dealt with this subject has already formulated the texts of five draft principles and identified three new common elements. However, there are still a number of controversial issues such as prior consent, access and dissemination of the remote-sensing data, application of the principle of sovereignty of a State over its natural resources etc.

The ever-improving technology of remote sensing can contribute very significantly to national development of the developing countries. The Indian delegation is of the view that, while the sovereignty of a State over its natural resources should in no way be impaired, the legal restraints should not be an obstacle to the extension of the benefits of this new and exciting technology to developing countries. In other words, we are for a legal framework which, on the one hand, prevents countries from being exploited and, on the other hand, enables them to reap maximum benefits from the remote-sensing programme.

The treaty relating to the moon continues to remain the most complex issue before the Legal Sub-Committee. No consensus has been reached with regard to any of the basic questions such as natural resources of the moon, information to be furnished on missions to the moon and the scope of the treaty. My delegation wishes to reiterate its basic position that any treaty on this subject should

(Mr. Thungon, India)

declare unequivocally the fundamental principle that the moon and other celestial bodies and their natural resources are the common heritage of mankind and, therefore, commercial exploitation of their natural resources shall not be done except in accordance with a universally recognized international régime.

My delegation endorses the observations made in the paragraph 45 of the Report commending the efficient manner in which the Expert on Space Applications has implemented the United Nations Programme within the limited funds at his disposal. The panel meetings, seminars and workshops organized under the auspices of the United Nations have been extremely successful and, in most cases, the Expert has been able to provide financial assistance to a limited number of persons from developing countries. However, the Programme on Space Applications continues to be meagre and inadequate. For a worth-while programme of technical assistance to developing countries, it is necessary that the United Nations should be able to act as an intermediary for the purpose of securing the performance of services, or the supplying of equipment or facilities, as well as to organize assistance through expert services, equipment, visiting consultants, fellowships, training programmes, etc.

We are living in an age where the users of outer space have brought about a reduction of the scale of earth and its neighbourhood. The new technology required for increasing difficult space missions has been advancing at a meteoric rate. We stand on the threshold of space exploitation which will be truly spectacular and fascinating. We can all reap maximum benefits only if we are able to resolve our differences and make co-operative efforts in this field thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of India for his generous remarks addressed to the offices of the Committee and to me personally.

Mr. SIBAHI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am taking the floor for the first time in this Committee and at the outset of my statement it is a pleasure for me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you warmly upon your election to serve as Chairman of this

(Mr. Sibahi, Syrian Arab Republic)

important Committee dealing with political matters, one amongst many of the Committees of the United Nations. I am convinced that your broad experience, your knowledge and your competence shall enable our Committee to achieve the desired results. You may be sure that my delegation will do everything that it can to help you in the discharge of your duties. You come from a country which is friendly to the Syrian Arab Republic. The desire to promote good relations and connexions between our two countries has for us always served as an inspiration. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Edouard Ghorra, the delegate of Lebanon and former Chairman of this Committee, and to do so because of the results he was able to achieve together with the collaboration of other members of Bureau. I should also like to take this opportunity to join preceding speakers in warmly congratulating the two Vice-Chairmen and other members of the Bureau who are seated about you at the rostrum of this Committee. My delegation is convinced that these constructive elements in the secretariats will help you in the discharge of your important duties. I should also like to express our appreciation to the interpreters who are assiduously working and I should particularly like to refer to the interpreters working in the Arab booth who are worthy of all of our admiration and esteem.

(Mr. Sibahi, Syrian Arab Republic)

We are about to embark upon a lengthy discussion on a question which for several years now has aroused interest among both developing and developed countries. For several days numerous delegations have given their positions in detail on a question of international importance to all peoples and countries, whether small or large, advanced or developing, whether engaged in space activities at this time ornot -- and other delegations intend to participate in this discussion.

Outer space, just as the earth, the oceans and the sea-bed, is in my delegation's view a part of the common heritage of mankind, whether taken separately or collectively. We believe that outer space is of interest to the entire world. It is of importance not merely to a few countries, whatever the results certain countries have been able to achieve in regard to space science and technology. That is why my delegation believes it to be its duty to express its position with regard to this common heritage and to its future development, which will be influenced in the course of the years by the technological and juridical positions taken by different countries. In this context my delegation would like to emphasize the practical applications of space technology for the social and economic development of developing countries. In this connexion, we should like to tell Mr. Jankowitsch, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, how pleased we are with the work that he has been undertaking so competently since 1972. Indeed, the initiative that he took to improve international co-operation with regard to the discovery of new resources in outer space, such as solar energy for example, was very timely. The Syrian Arab Republic while not a member of the Committee, none the less as a developing country and as a country belonging to the third world, is following with great interest the work and the discussions taking place within the Committee.

As we listened to the statements made by preceding speakers, we noted with satisfaction that there was at least a majority, if not unanimity, with regard to the peaceful economic and social impact of the exploitation of outer space. We fully support this trend, because we are extremely desirous of strengthening peace and understanding in international relations, and genuine co-operation among various countries is of very direct interest to us. Peace, as we all

(Mr. Sibahi, Syrian Arab Republic)

know, is indivisible, whether it be peace on earth, on the seas or in space. In this connexion it is recognized that the economic, social and political problems affecting the third world countries within the framework of an unjust and imbalanced economic system promotes relations which are not based upon equality among peoples, and that this imperils peace throughout the world. That is why we are so pleased to see that the international community is increasingly interested in economic problems and recognizes that the present international economic order is unfair and imbalanced and that the international community must seek the best ways and means of striking a better balance and achieving justice and equality in the distribution of resources belonging to the common heritage of mankind. My delegation hopes that our Committee will take all these facts into account as it co-operates with other United Nations bodies or with the institutions existing in Member States.

My delegation is following with great interest and satisfaction the progress that has been achieved by our Committee in drafting principles governing remote sensing. We hope that the Committee will be able to work out a draft international agreement on this question, with due respect for the sovereignty of States and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, in accordance with the Charter and United Nations decisions and with the norms of international law. The question of remote sensing is an important one that must be carefully studied by our Committee, and guarantees must be provided to ensure that broadcasting by satellite takes place in accordance with international law and with the principles of the United Nations Charter and decisions of the United Nations. An international conference should be convened for this purpose. We believe that the consent of the sensed countries must be given when data are to be compiled and transmitted to third States. This will guarantee the sovereignty of States and enable them to preserve their natural and human resources.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his generous reference to the friendly relations existing between our two countries and for his kind words addressed to the officers of the Committee and to me personally.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.