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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

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. HULINSKY (Czechoslovakia): The activities of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space are considered beneficial by my delegation. The United Nations has thus been committed in particular to the creation of conditions and guarantees for wide international co-operation in this field, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and respect for already concluded international agreements. We share the opinion that without international co-operation it would be rather difficult for the peaceful exploration of outer space to be maintained at its present high pace of development.

Czechoslovak scientists take part in the peaceful exploration of outer space primarily in the framework of the Intercosmos programme of the socialist States.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has been engaged so far in all Intercosmos projects by the preparation of scientific and telemetric equipment and the compilation of data obtained from satellites. In this respect Czechoslovakia has channelled its efforts to the scientific disciplines such as the study of the solar spectrum, radiobiology, biomedicine and also, recently, remote sensing of the earth.

In 1975 Czechoslovakia participated in the programme of two scientific satellites, Intercosmos 13 and 14, and in 1976 in the programme of technological satellite Intercosmos 15 and the solar satellite Intercosmos 16. Czechoslovak scientists assisted in the experiments of the biological satellites Cosmos 690 and 782. Czechoslovakia contributed to the construction of some Intercosmos laser radars, one of which is now operating at the La Paz station in Bolivia, and the second was put into operation in the Arab Republic of Egypt in the second half of 1975.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

Thanks to the opportunities offered by the Soviet Union to the Czechoslovak scientists and technicians in the framework of the Intercosmos programme, Czechoslovak basic research is able to utilize modern research methods applied in outer space explorations, particularly in astronomy, geophysics, experimental physics, geodesia, meteorology and, to some extent, in biology and medicine. The participation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the Intercosmos programme is advantageous for Czechoslovakia because it renders possible our access to its achievements, which will be of practical importance to a number of areas in our national economy.

On 13 July 1976 a multilateral intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes was concluded in Moscow, its parties being all States of the Intercosmos programme. The agreement established the legal basis for the further development of international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space. At the same time, the agreement reflected the present stage of the integration process of the socialist countries in the peaceful uses of outer space. On this basis, also, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic will, inter alia, line up with the countries whose astronauts have the opportunity to work in outer space.

Let me turn now to the main subject under discussion, the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (document A/31/20). And permit me to start with a general remark -- the wish for the further organization of the Committee's whole work. Scientific and technological progress in the field of outer space exploration is proceeding very rapidly. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the international legal regulation of the peaceful uses of outer space should not lag behind, at least in those areas where scientific and technological progress makes international legal regulation possible and, in fact, necessary. We are of the opinion in this connexion that closer co-ordination of the work of the Legal Sub-Committee with that of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee would assist in a more effective solution of the common problems of peaceful uses of outer space.

We note from the Committee's report that the treaty relating to the moon came very close to a satisfactory conclusion this year. We express the hope that the Committee will reach an agreement on the treaty at its next session.

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

It is not beyond reasonable expectation to hope that the question of direct television broadcasting from satellites will also be resolved soon. Certainly, the treaty or treaties concerned must be concluded prior to the practical commencement of direct transmission. The principles to be agreed upon must ensure that international understanding and peaceful co-operation are strengthened by this new and promising technique. For these reasons, it is quite essential that full respect should be paid to the sovereignty of States.

It is also desirable that various intergovernmental bodies interested in, and dealing with, this particular problem should co-ordinate their approach. We have in mind, in particular, the World Administrative Radio Conference for the Planning of the Broadcasting-Satellite Service to be convened by the International Telecommunication Union at Geneva in January 1977. The World Administrative Radio Conference should be informed about the present state of United Nations discussions on direct television broadcasting from satellites and it should take into account the results achieved and the opinions expressed in the Outer Space Committee and its Legal Sub-Committee.

As regards remote sensing of the earth from satellites, which is an important new technology for studying natural resources and the environment, it appears now that, besides the existing system of satellites, which is in an advanced experimental stage, there will be other space segments in the near future. These developments show that remote sensing of the earth from satellites has a global significance and there is, therefore, an important role to be played by the United Nations, in particular by its Outer Space Committee which, under General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), was given the primary responsibility to provide the "focal point" in all aspects of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. My delegation is of the opinion that international co-operation is of primary importance in the area of remote sensing from satellites and that the Outer Space Committee should take the above developments into consideration when remote sensing is discussed next year.

The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space faces a considerable number of very important tasks which have already been under consideration. In this connexion, the high level of scientific and organizational

(Mr. Hulinsky, Czechoslovakia)

work of the Outer Space Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat has been of great importance. I should like to note with appreciation that United Nations Member States have recently received dozens of first-rate studies and documents prepared by that Division.

The evaluation of the present work of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its future work, including priorities, would be contained in the usual omnibus draft resolution. The Czechoslovak delegation is ready to support the useful activities of the Outer Space Committee for the future.

Baron von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. Chairman, in consistency with rule 110, I should like to point out that my delegation has already had the pleasure of offering you its congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I feel it is appropriate that this Committee should once again be devoting part of its time to the important legal and political issues related to outer space.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the results achieved in 1976 by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees. Although some important problems still remain to be solved, my delegation is pleased to see the progress which has been made since the last session of the General Assembly. This progress is reflected in the draft resolution prepared by the Austrian delegation. We are happy to co-sponsor this draft, and I should like to thank the Austrian delegation for once more having taken the initiative of preparing a text which endorses the work done by the Outer Space Committee.

I should like to take the opportunity to thank its Chairman, Ambassador Jankowitsch, and the Chairmen of the two Sub-Committees, Ambassador Wyzner and Professor Carver, for their experienced guidance of the discussions of these two bodies. I should also like to thank the Secretariat for its excellent work and its helpful assistance to delegations.

The Federal Republic of Germany is committed to the principle of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. All our space activities are directed towards this aim.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

The implementation of this policy is demonstrated by our participation in international space programmes. The successful operation of the German-French Symphonie telecommunication satellites and the German-American Helios solar probes highlights the achievements of our space activities. The capability of Symphonie will, for example, be demonstrated by the establishment of a communication line between the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and Nairobi, where the UNESCO General Conference will open soon.

In the spirit of international co-operation, German space activities have become part of a larger European space programme. This programme is being carried out within the framework of the European Space Agency. Practical applications of space technology are predominant. At the same time, the Agency is carrying out a well-balanced scientific research programme. It will perhaps be extended to permit the appropriate use of space laboratories for scientific purposes.

The European Space Agency is currently developing such a space laboratory, called Spacelab. The Federal Republic of Germany is particularly interested in this project. It will constitute the European part of the future re-usable space transportation system for which the United States of America is at present developing the Space Shuttle. Spacelab will pave the way for the next phase of manned space flights. By re-using the system and with clearly improved working conditions in space, Spacelab will offer completely new possibilities of research, development and production in fields which have so far been earthbound. I am convinced that this utilization of space will "be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries", to quote article 1 of the Outer Space Treaty.

Other important activities of the European Space Agency concern application satellites for various telecommunication services. They embrace satellites for point-to-point broadcasting as well as for maritime and aeronautical communications.

With its meteorological satellite programme, Europe is contributing to the Global Atmospheric Research Programme initiated by the General Assembly, which is being carried out under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions. The European meteorological satellite, Meteosat, will be launched next year. It will be controlled by the European Space Operations Centre at Darmstadt in the Federal Republic of Germany.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

My delegation has carefully studied the report of the Outer Space Committee which is before us. I should like to restrict myself to a few comments on the major topics.

As for the Moon Treaty, my delegation regrets that no compromise could be reached on the key question of the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the moon. We had expected that it would be possible to finalize the draft of this treaty in 1976. We realize, however, that this complex subject requires thorough consideration. Therefore, more time is needed. In view of this, the Moon Treaty should once again be an item of high priority on the agenda of the Legal Sub-Committee at its next session.

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

I would like to turn to the question of direct television broadcasting from satellites. The Legal Sub-Committee was successful in formulating without brackets 9 of the 14 draft principles under discussion. My delegation appreciates the work done by the Legal Sub-Committee, especially in view of the fact that direct broadcasting continues to be a highly political and controversial subject. We have to face the fact that the most difficult issues in this field are still unsolved. Under the prevailing spirit of co-operation in the Outer Space Committee, I trust, however, that it will be possible to reach a generally acceptable compromise. Once a consensus has been reached, it will become necessary to streamline all principles accordingly and to fit them into the larger context of the complete draft. We should present to the General Assembly a text which is in itself coherent and not open to diverging interpretations.

One of the aspects to which my delegation attaches great importance is the role of the individual within the framework of international direct broadcasting. In our opinion, it is one of the main purposes of this new space technology to serve the needs of the individual. The draft principles do speak of peoples and their rights and benefits in connexion with direct broadcasting. It is evident, however, that the rights of a people and the benefits this people may gain through direct broadcasting are not necessarily identical with the rights and benefits related to a single individual. Therefore, the individual should find its appropriate place within the draft principles.

My delegation believes that individuals should have free access to all areas of information. The right of the individual to seek, receive and impart information and ideas across frontiers is well established by international instruments and declarations. Among them are the universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966. In article 19 of this Covenant all member States pledge that

"everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kind, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice."

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

In addition, the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe of 1975 in its declaration on principles guiding relations between participating States clearly reaffirms the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In Principle VII these States pledge that

"they will promote and encourage the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his free and full development".

It is my Government's firm belief that the free flow of information is one of the essential conditions without which the dignity of the human person cannot be guaranteed. We should, therefore, continue our efforts along the road which has been opened 30 years ago.

For some delegations the freedom of information seems to be in conflict with the sovereign right of States to control all information available on their territories. In order to ensure a comprehensive control, they have proposed that all international broadcasts be subject to prior consent by the receiving State. In the opinion of my delegation this would place an unbearable limitation on the freedom of information. My delegation is convinced that the concerns of some States would be sufficiently met by setting up an international code of conduct. It does not seem necessary to introduce the concept of prior consent. If difficulties should, however, arise, the normal mechanism of consultations would be an adequate means for settling disputes. The importance of this highly political matter justifies the amount of work and time which has been devoted to it so far and requires further efforts. We trust that ultimately a compromise will be found which takes care of our preoccupations. Therefore, we endorse the mandate to the Legal Sub-Committee to continue its elaboration of the draft principles for direct television broadcasting with high priority in 1977.

Now I would like to draw the attention of this Committee to the third major item on the agenda of the Outer Space Committee, namely remote sensing of the earth from outer space. Both the Legal and the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committees have made commendable progress in their deliberations on this subject. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has succeeded in further identifying

(Baron von Wechmar, Federal
Republic of Germany)

technical and organizational possibilities of this new technology. The Legal Sub-Committee has made a considerable step forward. In its 1976 session it has begun to draft principles which may eventually guide international remote-sensing activities. If the progress made is not as quick as some of us may have hoped, this is due to the fact that remote sensing is a technology that is still in its experimental stage. We are still very much in the process of learning and we have to be careful, therefore, in setting up the rules for this new technology.

Of all space technologies, remote sensing of the earth is probably the one most capable of contributing substantially towards improving economic conditions in the developing countries. I would refer to the potential uses of this technology for agriculture and water management, the prospecting of mineral resources and the protection of the environment, to mention only a few areas. Last year we submitted to the United Nations three studies on the application of remote sensing in agriculture, hydrology and the control of air pollution. This year we organized in Lengries near Munich a two-week training seminar on remote sensing with special emphasis on agriculture, hydrology and forestry for the benefits of participants from developing countries.

The Outer Space Committee plays an ever-increasing role in guiding the peaceful uses of outer space and can look back on very successful work in the past. Yet many problems remain to be solved. With man penetrating deeper in outer space every year, the answers to these problems become even more urgent.

This confronts the Outer Space Committee with a host of legal, scientific and technical questions with far-reaching social, economic and political implications. The Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to co-operate in this challenging task for the benefit of all.

Mr. BASSOLS (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, without prejudice to what the head of my delegation will say to you in due course I should like to say how gratified we are at your well-deserved election to the Chair of the First Committee, all the more so by reason of the excellent relations that exist between our two countries. My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Jankowitsch for his very lucid introduction of the report of the Committee, which indicates the parameters for action and the results of the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees, Ambassador Wyzner and Dr. Carver for the excellent work they have done.

(Mr. Bassols, Mexico)

First, we wish to analyse the results achieved by the Legal Sub-Committee. These were very productive results in respect of two of the priority items referred to in resolution 3388 and in the one relating to the draft treaty on the moon. A compromise formula could well close the gap that exists between the positions held so far. The principle of the common heritage of mankind which implies that it is not subject to ownership by any means by any State and that no State shall claim nor exercise sovereignty or sovereign rights on any part of it, in the view of my delegation, is applicable to the legal status of the moon and its resources. A number of developing countries submitted a working paper to the Legal Sub-Committee. Our delegations are prepared to negotiate on the basis of those premises. We would also have to include some legal principles to govern in the interim period until the establishment of the international régime to govern the exploitation of the resources of the moon in the event that the mechanism for a conference of States parties is acceptable. The work of Working Group II was very successful since it completed the text of new principles. The new space technology designed for direct television broadcasting will become a reality within a very few years and it is our concern that when that time comes the receiving country should not have contractually given its prior consent. We must therefore speed up the elaboration of that international instrument.

My delegation conceives the principle of consent and participation in respect of which many delegations have said that it is the corner-stone of the future international instrument, in the following manner. For international co operation to be effective, States must notify their intention to transmit or broadcast to the receiving State and there must be full consultation after notification. Those activities which include the programming and content of such programmes must ensure the participation of the receiving State. If there is no mutual agreement, those broadcasts will never be made. Once this principle is settled, it will be easy to reach agreement on the principles relating the content of programmes and unlawful and inadmissible broadcasts, the text relating to which we find in brackets in the text.

Remote sensing of the earth from outer space in my delegation's view affects the permanent sovereignty of a State over its natural resources and engenders the

(Mr. Bassols, Mexico)

rights of State over the data and information obtained within the areas under its national jurisdiction. Of course, these two principles are consistent with the outer space treaty of 1967 and this is the reason why we are so desirous to continue the legal consideration of remote sensing with a view to the elaboration of principles. The draft treaty co-sponsored by all the Latin American States members of the Committee is an excellent element to be used as a basis for our work and it is to be hoped that next year the work will begin with the fundamental principles to be followed by the identification of items and areas of agreement, after which we would proceed to the actual drawing up of that instrument.

It is the honour of my delegation to co-sponsor the omnibus resolution but we believe it is desirable to point out that if, at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee, the latter finds that it is unable to make progress in respect of the treaty relating to the moon then high priority should be given to those two items that are of special concern to the developing countries, namely, remote sensing and direct television broadcasting from artificial satellites.

With reference to the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the possible United Nations conference on outer space, my delegation has already stated that it supports the convening of that conference but only after a careful assessment of the possible results to be achieved by such a costly event. We believe that the main objectives of the conference should be the establishment of a system of information on the different applications of space technology in order to have each country establish its own programme in keeping with its urgent needs and respective economic system. Similarly, there should be an evaluation in keeping with the programmes submitted by countries with a view to establishing an efficient system of transfer of technology to countries that are beginning to make use of space technology.

In implementing the new international economic order, all the peoples of the world -- and outer space is not alien to this philosophy -- should promote the development of the third world countries. Here lies possibly the most important aspect of this future event.

The work of a small group of professionals in the Outer Space Division deserves the full praise of my delegation. They have made great efforts to meet the requests of countries to attend seminars, to train personnel, to provide

(Mr. Bassols, Mexico)

information and to prepare the excellent documentation to which they have accustomed us and all of this they have done again this year. We believe, therefore, that the time has come to expand or enlarge the cadre of that Division, bearing in mind in particular the principle of equitable geographic representation as well as the high technical competence of the staff involved. In a lucid and most appropriate manner, the Chairman of the Committee more than a year ago submitted a new survey on outer space and the Argentine delegation distributed a very useful working paper. Both of these initiatives on the subject are welcomed by us and we believe it is desirable to initiate the study on the use of solar energy through space technology.

We are happy to conclude this brief review of the results and prospects of the Committee in respect of the peaceful uses of outer space because we are convinced that the international community has achieved considerable progress in that area in an era of co-operation and peace and within a scientific, technical, political and juridical framework, and that the peoples of the third world already share in some of the conquests of the most outstanding contemporary technology. They are also participating in the solution of the creative challenge imposed on jurists, the elaboration of applicable juridical norms before technology goes beyond their expectation.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Mexico for his reference to the relations between our two countries, as well as for the words he addressed to me personally.

Mr. SZARKA (Hungary): May I at the very outset, extend to you, Comrade Chairman, my warmest and most sincere congratulations on your election to the responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation is particularly pleased to see you in the Chair, since our two countries and peoples maintain the very best friendly relations, and it is my personal honour to assure you of our full support in your devoted work during our deliberations on those important issues facing this Committee.

I cannot fail to take this opportunity to express our best wishes to all the Officers of the Committee.

My delegation's general remarks are based on the continuous positive trend of the current state of affairs, of the international situation as concerns, among others, the peaceful uses of outer space and intergovernmental co-operation in this field. We continue to believe that détente as the main trend in international affairs, despite periodic and tendentious misinterpretations, effectively contributes to the common desire of advanced and less-advanced States with regard to wide and fruitful international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

In recent times we have witnessed further encouraging efforts in this respect, and I would like to put on record our deep satisfaction at the latest results in the peaceful uses of outer space.

We bear in mind particularly the consistent manned space programme of the Soviet Union, and we also congratulate the United States on the Mars programme carried out in recent months.

We are firmly convinced that the remarkable results achieved in the peaceful uses of outer space, such as those I have just mentioned, will be of benefit to all the interested nations.

In this context, my delegation, as one of the Contracting Parties, wishes to mention and emphasize here our particular interest in the content and spirit of the "Agreement of the socialist countries on Co-operation in the Exploration and the Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes", signed in Moscow on 13 July 1976 (document A/C.1/31/3). That Agreement will definitely contribute to the development of international co-operation in this area.

I should like to turn now to some specific comments made on the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in document A/31/20. In accordance with the best traditions of the Committee, we are provided again with a remarkable

(Mr. Szarka, Hungary)

and concise report submitted for our consideration so excellently by the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Jankowitsch of Austria. At the same time we pay our tribute to the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees, Comrade Wyzner of Poland and Mr. Carver of Australia, for their dedicated work.

I do not wish to go into the actual details of the report, but I should like to touch briefly on some of its points which are of particular interest to us. Regarding the subjects dealt with by the Legal Sub-Committee, we note with satisfaction that, after some very delicate discussion, the Sub-Committee was able to make considerable progress in the elaboration of principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct broadcasting. The nine principles formulated during this year's session are encouraging with regard to the future work on this subject. In our judgement, however, further delay is not justified in questions like consent and programme content. We understand the complexity of these areas, but we agree with other delegations that the principles already drafted will encourage delegations to reach mutually convenient agreements.

Bearing in mind the problems indicated, the Hungarian delegation wishes to emphasize its position of principle here again, namely that the sovereignty of States and the concept of prior consent of the receiving State should be strictly observed in the elaboration of further governing principles, if we are to reach long-range and widely acceptable agreements.

We welcome the understanding reached on the newly formulated common elements in the Sub-Committee's Working Group III, which may become a significant part of the draft principles covering the legal implications of remote sensing of the earth from space.

With respect to the question of the draft treaty relating to the moon, it was understood that, despite the serious efforts made in order to reach a compromise solution, no new text could be elaborated in Working Group I. Since this Working Group is presided over by the Hungarian representative, may I express our belief that this subject will receive more thorough and responsible consideration. I can assure representatives that the Hungarian delegation will continue to do its best to help find a way out of the stalemate during the forthcoming discussions.

We fully agree with indications that the mandate to be given to the Legal Sub-Committee may follow the well-established order of work on the high-priority subjects.

(Mr. Szarka, Hungary)

We cannot but express satisfaction at the serious and responsible work accomplished by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee this year again, and we gladly note the progress achieved. The service of the Secretariat of the United Nations proved to be useful and successful in helping the work of the Sub-Committee, and I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Outer Space Division for their untiring assistance in preparing the useful and comprehensive studies on various topics, particularly on the questions relating to remote sensing of the earth by satellites.

My Government has already expressed its view on the question of a possible United Nations conference on outer space matters, and we do hope that accommodation of the different positions will be feasible.

We express our appreciation for the continuation of the implementation of the United Nations programme on space applications, and my delegation reiterates its position of principle that more assistance and information should be provided to the developing countries to promote practical application of space technology.

Let me conclude by stating my Government's deep appreciation of the work accomplished by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and of the role played by the respective organs of the United Nations in this field. We do believe in the need for further efforts to establish a long-range framework of international co-operation among all nations interested in the area of the peaceful uses of outer space. The Hungarian People's Republic continues to be ready to play its part in this work.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to thank the representative of Hungary, Foreign Minister Szarka, especially for his very generous reference to the close relations of friendship existing between our two countries and peoples, and also for his kind words addressed to the officers of the Committee and to me personally.

Mr. VINCI (Italy): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor in the First Committee, I wish first of all to fulfil a pleasant duty: to convey to you, Sir, my most sincere and heartfelt congratulations upon your election. You have long enjoyed the high esteem of many colleagues -- myself, for one -- and I am sure that we all share in this chamber the conviction that we could not be in better hands during this session. Your guidance and experience, which have already proved so valuable in organizing the calendar of our Committee, are the best guarantee of success for our work. Allow me also to recall on this occasion the cordial relations existing between your country and mine.

I wish also to congratulate our distinguished Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur on their elections.

Going to the moon and breaking free from earth's gravity has been a dream of mankind for centuries. This dream has only come true recently, and what is even more astonishing in such a short space of time is that outer space activities have provided a number of new findings and valuable devices for the progress of mankind and the improvement of our life on our own small planet.

The first to come to my mind among these improvements and these advances are the satellites with all their paraphernalia: telephone and television transmission, navigation, weather forecasting, the search for natural resources. I am just mentioning some of the fields in which the satellites have enabled us to achieve results which no one would have dreamt of and which are now part of our daily working life.

Then, of course, astronomy and space research: by putting instruments beyond the atmosphere and, indeed, on the moon and the near planets, space has given us scientific data that could not have been obtained using earth-borne instruments.

Finally even more spectacular achievements, the manned flights in outer space, the landing by man on the moon and, most recently, the successful landings of Viking landers on the planet of Mars, have put to new tests the physical endurance and the potential of man's mind, engineering and determination. Today we face new challenges in the area of space research and application.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

In the area of practical application a well-developed and highly useful space technology is now available. This will be and should be exploited widely and freely by all countries which wish to utilize it for the benefit of their people. This will encourage the search for and development of practical and scientific applications.

The development of this new activity is opening vast possibilities for the welfare and advancement of peoples throughout the world. This is a development which will not fail to produce positive effects on the tasks entrusted to the United Nations. A great deal of work is indeed going on in our Organization on the use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The Outer Space Committee has already made an invaluable contribution to the cause of organizing broad international co-operation in the field of outer space. 1976 has been another year of fruitful work.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

In this connexion we should like to pay tribute in particular to Ambassador Jankowitsch, Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, for his tireless efforts and useful initiatives which have contributed considerably to the success obtained so far by the Committee. We wish also to thank the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees and the members of the Outer Space Division of the Secretariat, especially Dr. Perek.

I shall comment in a moment on the areas in which we believe there is a particular need to make more progress. However, I would like first to speak briefly about the development of Italy's space programme since last we reported to this Committee. Italy continues to place particular emphasis on the programmes of the European Agency, which include for 1977 the launching of the METSAT, OTS and MAROTS satellites, and also the launching of three new scientific satellites. Italy is a member of the Agency and one of its largest contributors; we participate in all its programmes.

Besides these joint European activities, Italy undertakes national space programmes, such as the Sirio programme, under the aegis of the National Council for Scientific Research (CNR). The launching of the satellite of the same name next year will make it possible to carry out a series of experiments in the field of frequencies higher than 10 gigacycles.

As is the case with the programmes of the Space Agency, in the implementation of the Sirio programme, as well, the vehicles for placing the satellites in orbit are supplied on a commercial basis by NASA. The Italian delegation acknowledges with appreciation the spirit of collaboration which is the moving force behind such agreements. We hope that this spirit can develop even further with the advent of the new capabilities which in the 1980s will be offered by the NASA Space Shuttle, and in particular by the space laboratory SPACELAB, achieved through the collaboration of NASA and the European Agency -- a laboratory which will, in fact, be put into orbit by the Space Shuttle.

Italy, by participating to the greatest extent in this programme of the Agency, reaffirms its strong faith in the future development of the prospects of these space activities for peaceful uses and for economic and social development. In the framework of Italian space activities, the San Marco programme, supported

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

by the Centro Ricerche Aerospaziali -- the Aerospace Research Centre -- is also of great interest. This programme contemplates in the first months of 1978 the launching of two scientific satellites for the exploration of the atmosphere for meteorological purposes. The launchings will take place from the off-shore Italian base situated in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Kenya, once other satellites have been launched successfully from the same base.

As a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Italian delegation has actively contributed together with the other delegations towards completing the task set forth in last year's resolution (3388 (XXX)).

The Italian delegation is glad to note that constant, although slow, progress has been made. Suffice it to compare last year's report with that of this year. It is therefore important to maintain and possibly increase the momentum in the Committee and Sub-Committees so that further progress may be achieved.

I will take up only some of the key points of the various matters dealt with in the report before us, since our views are generally well known. I shall therefore speak of what we feel deserves particular attention at this juncture.

First of all, the draft treaty relating to the moon: its elaboration is progressing very slowly. Italy wishes to reiterate its conviction, and its willingness to contribute to a balanced compromise -- a solution, in other words, reconciling the present positions of the various parties in order that the main obstacles to the completion of the draft treaty may be surmounted.

With regard to the principles governing the use of direct television satellites, my delegation welcomes the formulation and adoption of a number of these principles. None the less, a key problem remains unsolved; namely, that of consent and participation. I wish to emphasize here once again my country's faith in the free circulation of ideas, news and information -- a principle which is at the basis of peaceful co-operation between peoples and States, and which, as such, was firmly and clearly reaffirmed in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

Italy welcomes also the progress made this year in the field of remote sensing of the earth, to which the Committee and its Sub-Committees devoted a very substantial part of their time, particularly for the elaboration of guidelines.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

The need to establish a legal régime for remote sensing stems from the fact that these activities are both spatial and terrestrial. Therefore we cannot find in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty all the answers to the questions raised by this new development; so we must work out specific rules for this purpose. We believe, however, that further discussions on this legal framework must not result in severe restrictions of remote sensing activities. Should this occur, it could seriously jeopardize the sound development of outer space technology and its vast potential uses for the common benefit of mankind.

A restrictive data dissemination policy would seriously inhibit, rather than encourage, the increased application of modern technology -- particularly to the development programmes of States in an early stage of industrialization. We do not believe that a broad and free dissemination of data could be construed in itself as affecting the sovereign right of States over their natural resources. The image of a gold mine is not the gold mine itself. We feel that a flexible approach by the international community towards the various aspects of remote sensing is the most appropriate and useful, leaving it up to each country to decide its position case by case. Italy has a liberal and positive attitude towards future developments. We do not suffer from any sort of anxiety about who senses our national territory. The ideas on the exchange of information as embodied in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe have always been part of Italian thinking, and they will continue to characterize our attitude towards remote sensing.

We have frequently heard ominous voices predicting that the twenty-first century may be plagued by hunger, by shortage of water or by air pollution.

Advanced technology has already been indicated as the answer to such pessimistic views. The contribution of space activities to solve such problems, thus allaying the apprehensions of many, has certainly proved essential, as shown by the present state and outlook of applied space technology. It is, of course, true that both the population and the per capita demands on the earth's resources have risen and seem likely to continue to soar. This requires that more accurate and frequent inventories of the earth's resources must be taken, more, I mean, than has been the case in the past. Space satellites enable us now to do this.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

Lines, patterns and colours in aerial and space photos can reveal the marvellous work and abundant gifts of nature. Colours are indicative of the vegetation, soil conditions, depth of the water, and many other matters of vital concern to mankind.

At the present time, the earth's resources are generally managed in a fragmented way by private undertakings, government agencies and commercial organizations using a variety of ground techniques coupled with limited aircraft photography to acquire survey data. The development of remote sensing technology and space monitoring systems has opened a new dimension in this all-important work of measurement and appraisal.

Repetitive aerial and space surveys during the vegetative growth and harvest times of a crop may provide reliable inventories of the size of the harvest. The possibility is being explored to extend predictive techniques from remote sensing to much larger multicrop areas.

Of course, the very abundance of data and information now obtainable implies that its storage, interpretation and dissemination be properly and adequately organized and monitored. This is a new activity, highly technical in nature and of wide general interest, to be developed at the same fast pace at which remote sensing is progressing.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

Italy was among the first to appreciate the potentialities of remote sensing. After some experiments in this field, stable and continuous research was undertaken in our country in 1970, when a small group of scientists of the National Research Council (CNR) made the study of the new techniques the subject of the Council's regular work.

After the first presentations of the United States satellite, Landsat-1, interest grew among all the specialists.

The launching of Landsat 2, and the completion of the ground receiving station at Fucino, near Rome, represented a landmark in the Italian activity and served to boost the interest of Italian industry. Moreover, aircraft flights using multispectral photography and two-channel thermal scanners are currently performed on a national basis. (This is merely one example of the favourable consequences of Italy's action in the field of remote sensing.)

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the United States Space Agency (NASA) and Telespazio (a State-supported telecommunications company, and a member of Intelsat) in May 1974. Under this arrangement, Telespazio acquired the right to read out data from ERTS-type satellites in real time through the ground station at Fucino, in the Abruzzi. This station, which includes extensive facilities for processing remotely sensed data, is owned and operated by Telespazio. The initial activities of the Italian station concerned an experimental programme, the so-called Terra experiment, on techniques for collecting and processing earth resources data.

The ground station began the read-out of data from the Landsat space craft on a regular basis in April 1975. In addition to Landsat 1 and 2, the facility also acquired data from weather satellites, and is equipped to receive data from forthcoming earth observation satellites such as Landsat-C, Meteosat, Nimbus-G and Seasat.

The station can cover the whole Mediterranean area, as well as Europe, and can also accept input data gathered by airborne multispectral scanner systems.

As a second-generation development, the Telespazio information processing system was created. This system is especially designed for high-speed processing of earth resources survey data, and is the first system of its kind in the world to become operational in the civilian applications field. The system can be

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

effectively utilized to process earth observation data at all levels; that is, not only to carry out pre-processing tasks, but also to convert earth resources survey data into information ready for dissemination, in fields such as monitoring coastal estuary dynamics, snow-cover mapping for run-off predictions, and crop yield and vegetation mapping.

Italy considers its Fucino Centre not only a national facility, but also a station which could benefit the whole Mediterranean area with the results of its operations.

As a proof of this conviction, my Government is supporting the establishment of an experimental international course to train and assist experts from developing countries to make the most effective use of remote sensing information.

I may recall, in this regard, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3388 (XXX), under which the Secretary-General was invited to explore the possibility of establishing, on an experimental basis, an international centre for the training of personnel from developing countries in the effective use of remote sensing information, utilizing existing facilities at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in Rome.

An agreement was rapidly reached between the United Nations and the Government of Italy. The course will take place in Rome, using the facilities of FAO, and Italian expertise as well as that of the United Nations, FAO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This course is designed to benefit the developing countries of Africa, and will deal with remote sensing in agriculture in semi-arid zones. The Government of Italy is providing 18 fellowships to the participants and a team of instructors, as well as full access to our ground station at Fucino, near Rome.

I am happy to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that a few days ago I signed the agreement between the United Nations and my Government, which has thus entered into force. And I can now announce that the planned training course will be held in Rome from 25 October to 12 November 1976.

It remains for me to express, through the representatives of the various African countries who will send experts to participate in the course, my warmest wishes to their young promising nationals who are undertaking this course and this new experience.

(Mr. Vinci Italy)

I have full confidence that the course in Rome will prove fruitful also in strengthening further co-operation between Italy and the African countries, and between developed and developing countries in general.

I should like to state, in conclusion, that the Italian delegation will be very pleased to co-sponsor the omnibus draft resolution on the peaceful uses of outer space which is to be introduced in this Committee tomorrow by the representative of Austria, Mr. Jankowitsch. It is our belief that, with the clear guidance provided by this resolution, progress can be made during next year, and in this collective effort I pledge Italy's full support and co-operation.

The CHAIRMAN: I appreciate the kind reference by the representative of Italy and former Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Vinci, to the cordial relations existing between his country and mine, and also his very generous remarks addressed to me personally and to the other officers of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.