



# General Assembly

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**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space  
Fifty-third session  
Vienna, 9-18 June 2010**

## **Draft report**

## **Chapter II**

## **Recommendations and decisions**

### **H. Space and climate change**

1. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled “Space and climate change”, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/86.
2. The representatives of Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and the United States made statements under this item. Representatives of other member States also made statements relating to this item during the general exchange of views.
3. The Committee heard a presentation entitled “The application of satellite remote sensing on climate change and food security in Indonesia”, by the representative of Indonesia.
4. The Committee noted that the adverse effects of climate change constituted a threat to all humanity and were manifested in a variety of phenomena, such as unusual weather, including droughts in some regions and floods in others; unusual dust storms in the Arabian region; glacial retreat in the Himalayas; and changes in the polar ice sheets.
5. The Committee noted that, because of the global nature of climate change, global observations were required to monitor it more precisely, and that space-based observations, complemented with ground-based observations, were well-suited to monitor the different manifestations of climate change and the factors contributing to it.
6. The Committee noted the efforts conducted in various countries regarding the deployment of satellites carrying a variety of instruments to measure some essential

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climate variables and to monitor different processes related to climate change, such as emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols, atmospheric dynamics, deforestation emissions and land degradation.

7. The Committee noted international efforts conducted under the auspices of the United Nations system (in particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the World Meteorological Organization), as well as other international initiatives, such as those of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, the Group on Earth Observations, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which were also targeting climate change.

8. Some delegations were of the view that the Committee should play a more proactive role in advocating international cooperation in the deployment and use of satellites to observe the effects of climate change, including in terms of disasters.

## **I. Use of space technology in the United Nations system**

9. The Committee continued its consideration of the agenda item entitled “Use of space technology in the United Nations system”, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/86.

10. The representatives of Colombia, Germany and the United Arab Emirates made statements under the item. Representatives of other member States also made statements relating to this item during the general exchange of views. The observer for ITU made a statement, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities at its thirtieth session, to inform the Committee about the results of that meeting.

11. The Committee had before it the report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities on its thirtieth session (A/AC.105/960), which had been held in Geneva from 10 to 12 March 2010, and the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2010-2011 (A/AC.105/961).

12. The Committee noted with appreciation the measures and decisions taken by the Inter-Agency Meeting to further strengthen its role as a central mechanism of the United Nations for the coordination of space-related activities, namely:

(a) The reorientation of the report of the Secretary-General to allow for a stronger emphasis on the United Nations development agenda and a contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(b) The agreement on the preparation of biennial special reports on selected thematic areas;

(c) The agreement to hold the annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Meeting in Geneva to facilitate greater participation of United Nations entities and programmes.

13. The Committee noted with appreciation that the special report for 2011, to be prepared by WMO in cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, would address climate change and the use of space technology in the United Nations system.

14. The Committee noted that the seventh open informal session for member States and observers of the Committee, on the theme “Space technology for emergency communications” had been held immediately following the thirtieth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting, on 12 March 2010.

15. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat continued to maintain a website on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system ([www.uncosa.unvienna.org](http://www.uncosa.unvienna.org)). The presentations made at the thirtieth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting and the subsequent open informal session, as well as other information on the current space-related activities of United Nations entities, are available on that website.

16. The Committee noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs, as secretariat of the Inter-Agency Meeting, was coordinating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the hosting of its thirty-first session, in Geneva in 2011, and that the open informal session, open to all members and permanent observers of the Committee, would be held in the afternoon of the last day of the session. The theme would be selected in consultation with UNHCR and other participating United Nations entities.

17. Some delegations welcomed the working paper by the Chair of the Committee for the period 2008-2009 entitled “Towards a United Nations space policy” (A/AC.105/L.278) and noted that the paper proposed a holistic approach for enhancing coordination between member States and the United Nations in applying space science and technology to meet the challenges to development of all countries.

18. Some delegations expressed the view that the working paper deserved further discussion with a view to developing and elaborating on the issues addressed therein.

## **J. International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development**

19. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled “International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development”, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/86.

20. The representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and the United States made statements under the item. Other member States made statements related to this item during the general exchange of views.

21. The Committee heard the following technical presentations under the item:

- (a) “OCEANSAT-2: meeting global demand”, by the representative of India;
- (b) “Geo-wiki.org: how community remote sensing can help to improve global land cover”, by the representative of Austria;

(c) “Utilizing space geospatial data for complex diagnosis of earthquake precursors”, by the representative of the Russian Federation;

(d) “International Global Monitoring Aerospace System: new approach to the disaster management issue”, by the representative of the Russian Federation.

22. In the course of the discussion, delegations reviewed national and cooperative activities in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development, providing examples of national programmes and bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

23. The Committee noted the importance of remote sensing applications and spatial data infrastructures for decisions in the areas of socio-economic and environmental management, which relied heavily on the availability of accurate data on natural resources and other geospatial data.

24. The Committee noted that a number of organizations and initiatives at the regional and global levels, such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, the European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information and the Group on Earth Observations, contributed to capacity-building and to the coordination and promotion of activities related to the use of space-derived geospatial data, as well as sharing data from current and future satellite systems and opening up access to previously unavailable data sets.

25. The Committee noted the increased availability of space-based data at little or no cost, including those provided by the China-Brazil Earth resources satellites, the Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite of Japan and the United States Landsat image archive.

26. The Committee noted the activities being carried out by the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group, currently co-chaired by the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Economic Commission for Africa, which was addressing common geospatial issues in the United Nations system and working towards implementation of the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure.

27. The view was expressed that because the Earth was a home shared by all humankind, it was a responsibility of States to promote the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development through extensive international cooperation.

28. The view was expressed that transparency and clarity should be encouraged in mechanisms to guarantee that developing countries have access to geospatial data for the advancement of sustainable development.

29. The Committee noted that, in response to the agreement reached at its fifty-second session, the delegation of Brazil had held informal consultations with all interested members of the Committee to reach consensus on a set of recommendations on ways and means to foster international cooperation with a view to building up national infrastructures for the use of space-derived geospatial data. On the basis of those consultations, the Committee considered a draft report (A/AC.105/2010/CRP.16) and agreed that that text should constitute the final report of the Committee on international cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development (to be issued as A/AC.105/973).

## K. Other matters

30. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled “Other matters”, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/86.

31. The representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, the Sudan, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements under the item. The observer for Costa Rica also made a statement.

32. The observers for IAASS and ARSCAW also made statements under the item.

### 1. Proposed strategic framework for the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space for the period 2012-2013

33. The Committee had before it for its consideration the proposed strategic framework for the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space for the period 2012-2013 (A/65/6 (Prog. 5)). The Committee agreed on the proposed strategic framework.

### 2. Composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2012-2013

34. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/86 and pursuant to the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies<sup>1</sup> as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, the Committee considered the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2012-2013.

35. The Committee noted that the Group of Asian States had endorsed the candidature of Yasushi Horikawa (Japan) for the office of Chair of the Committee for the period 2012-2013 (A/AC.105/2010/CRP.9).

36. The Committee noted that the Group of Western European and Other States had endorsed the candidature of Filipe Duarte Santos (Portugal) for the office of First Vice-Chair of the Committee for the period 2012-2013 (A/AC.105/2010/CRP.10).

37. The Committee noted that the Group of Eastern European States had endorsed the candidature of Elöd Both (Hungary) for the office of Second Vice-Chair/Rapporteur of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the period 2012-2013 (A/AC.105/2010/CRP.12).

38. The Committee noted that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States had endorsed the candidature of Félix Clementino Menicocci (Argentina) for the office of Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the period 2012-2013 (A/AC.105/2010/CRP.14).

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20), annex I; see also Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.*

39. [...]

### **3. Membership of the Committee**

40. The Committee welcomed the application of Tunisia for membership of the Committee (see A/AC.105/2010/CRP.3).

41. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, in 2010, that Tunisia should become a member of the Committee.

### **4. Observer status**

42. The Committee welcomed the additional information provided by IAASS in accordance with the request made by the Committee at its fifty-second session, in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The application of IAASS is contained in conference room papers A/AC.105/2009/CRP.8 and A/AC.105/2010/CRP.4 and Add.1.

43. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, the granting of permanent observer status to IAASS, on the understanding that, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its thirty-third session concerning observer status for non-governmental organizations and in accordance with the practice established by the Committee, IAASS would apply for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

44. The Committee took note of the application of the Association of Remote Sensing Centers in the Arab World. The relevant correspondence was before the Committee in conference room paper A/AC.105/2010/CRP.5.

45. [...]

46. The Committee agreed that in the future, observer status would be granted to non-governmental organizations on a provisional basis, for a period of three years, pending information on the status of their application for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Committee agreed that the provisional observer status could be extended for an additional year, if necessary. The Committee further agreed that it would grant permanent observer status to such non-governmental organizations upon confirmation of their consultative status with the Council.

### **5. Organizational matters**

47. The Committee recalled that at its fifty-second session, in 2009, it had requested the members of its bureau and the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies to consider how to rationalize and optimize the use of the time of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, taking into account the need to balance the value brought by the technical presentations and the need to have adequate time for substantive consideration of the issues before the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

48. The Committee requested the Secretariat to implement measures to rationalize and optimize the use of time of the Committee and its Subcommittees, taking into account the need for maximum flexibility in organizing the work of their sessions

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., *Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/64/20)*, para. 312.

in 2011, including the possibility of scheduling symposiums in the second week of a session.

49. To enable the Committee and its Subcommittees to commence their consideration of all the items of their provisional agendas in a timely and balanced manner, the Committee agreed that the possibility of scheduling the item entitled "General exchange of views" over a longer period of time during their sessions should be explored. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should coordinate with delegations on the rescheduling of statements under that item to a later meeting so as to allow sufficient time for other items of the agenda to be considered as planned.

50. The Committee agreed that the reports to be submitted by Member States on their national activities in outer space (see A/AC.105/958, para. 19) should comprise a summary of those activities and not exceed three pages.

51. The Committee recommended that informal consultations be held among interested member States in the margins of the sessions of the Committee and its Subcommittees in 2011, with a view to proposing further measures to rationalize and optimize the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

52. The Committee agreed to continue reviewing its methods of work at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011.

53. The Committee requested the Secretariat to present to the Legal Subcommittee at its fiftieth session and the Committee at its fifty-fourth session, for their consideration, a detailed proposal to discontinue the use of unedited transcripts. The use of digital recordings should be assessed.

54. The Committee noted the following proposals for optimizing and rationalizing its work and that of the Subcommittees:

- (a) Clustering of agenda items;
- (b) Opening only one item per meeting;
- (c) Making better use of existing tools, such as the daily *Journal* and indicative schedule of work;
- (d) Uploading statements on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, and the introduction of webcasts;
- (e) Limiting the number of interventions by delegations under each agenda item;
- (f) Limiting the length of presentations of information on national activities and projects in statements;
- (g) Beginning meetings promptly, as scheduled;
- (h) Reducing the length and quantity of technical presentations, and the establishment of selection criteria.

55. The Committee considered, upon the request of the States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the possibility of introducing new procedural terminology in reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies when reflecting views of that regional group.

56. Some delegations were of the view that the reference to names of regional groups in connection with the summaries of views in reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would support the principle of multilateralism and extend a similar practice adopted in other committees of the General Assembly and organizations of the United Nations system.

57. Some delegations were of the view that the present procedural terminology remained relevant and that it reflected clearly the spirit of consensus in the decision-making of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. Those delegations were of the view that references to names of regional groups in connection with the summaries of views in reports could upset the balance in them by creating the impression that views expressed by a group prevailed over views expressed by individual States.

58. The Committee agreed to include the names of regional groups in the paragraphs listing the speakers under each agenda item in the reports of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

**6. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first session of the Committee and the fiftieth anniversary of human space flight**

59. The Committee recalled its agreement at its fifty-second session, in 2009, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first session of the Committee and the fiftieth anniversary of the first human space flight at its fifty-fourth session, scheduled to be held from 1 to 10 June 2011.

60. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Office for Outer Space Affairs had begun to make arrangements for special events and activities to be held throughout 2011 in celebration of those milestones and that, together with the Chair of the Committee, it had conducted informal consultations with interested member States regarding the events to take place at the fifty-fourth session of the Committee.

61. The Committee agreed that the first day of its fifty-fourth session should be dedicated to the commemoration of the two anniversaries to enable representation at the highest level.

62. The Committee agreed that the commemorative events on 1 June 2011 would include a high-level segment, open to all Member States of the United Nations. Those events would have the participation of representatives at the ministerial level, heads of agencies, astronauts and other dignitaries and would address the achievements of the Committee over the course of 50 years, the 50 years of human space flight and the future of humanity in outer space.

63. The Committee encouraged Member States to draw the attention of their ministers, heads of agencies and other dignitaries to the commemorative events with a view to securing their participation.

64. The Committee agreed that a joint statement or similar communiqué should be prepared to raise awareness of how international cooperation is accelerating progress in space science and technology and their application for achieving sustainable development. The Committee agreed that the first draft of the statement should be circulated before the forty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.



65. The Committee agreed that as from Thursday, 2 June 2011, the work of its session would follow the usual pattern.

66. The Committee agreed that an informal consultative group, composed of representatives of the permanent missions of interested States, would be set up to support the Chair in the preparations for the event and that interested representatives of the permanent missions should be invited to provide their names to the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

#### **7. Future role and activities of the Committee**

67. The Committee continued its consideration of the topic "Future role and activities of the Committee", in accordance with the agreement reached at its fifty-second session.

68. The Committee noted with appreciation the working paper by the Chair of the Committee for the period 2008-2009 entitled "Towards a United Nations space policy" (A/AC.105/L.278) and agreed to include a new item entitled "Future role of the Committee" on the agenda for its fifty-fourth session, for one year only, to enable the Committee to further consider that paper.

#### **8. Panel discussion during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly**

69. The Committee agreed that the panel discussion to be held in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly during its sixty-fifth session, when it considers the item "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", should be on the subject "Space and emergencies".

#### **9. Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-fourth session of the Committee**

70. The Committee recommended that the following substantive items be considered at its fifty-fourth session, in 2011:

1. General exchange of views.
2. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.
3. Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).
4. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its forty-eighth session.
5. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on its fiftieth session.
6. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.
7. Space and society.
8. Space and water.
9. Space and climate change.
10. Use of space technology in the United Nations system.
11. Future role of the Committee.
12. Other matters.

**L. Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies**

71. The Committee agreed on the following tentative timetable for its session and those of its subcommittees in 2011:

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee	9-18 February 2011	Vienna
Legal Subcommittee	28 March-8 April 2011	Vienna
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	1-10 June 2011	Vienna

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