

**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space***Unedited transcript*579<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Thursday, 14 June 2007, 3 p.m.

Vienna

*Chairman:* Mr. G. Brachet (France)*The meeting was called to order at 3.07 p.m.*

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Distinguished delegates, first of all thank you for being so punctual for the 579th meeting of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I hope you have enjoyed the documentaries screened during the lunch break and I would like to thank all the contributors of the documentaries for this excellent display of space activities captured on film as we were shown those throughout the week during lunch break.

Distinguished delegates, this afternoon we will continue and if possible conclude our consideration of three agenda items which are as follows, 7, 12 and 13. Since the Director of OOSA is not available yet on item 7, we will start with 12, geospatial data and applications for sustainable development and, under this item, we now have a statement from Mr. Gilberto Camara, the Brazilian delegation.

**International cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development (agenda item 12)**

**Mr. G. CAMARA** (Brazil): Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, good afternoon all the representatives to the COPUOS plenary. The General Assembly has agreed that the Committee should consider at this session this item of international cooperation in promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. It is my pleasure today to indicate how Brazil intends to cooperate with COPUOS to support this initiative.

The recent scientific reports by the international panel of climate change leaves no doubt as to our common responsibilities in having produced an enormous change in our planet's environment. The evidence of change is already with us. The scientific evidence also points out that the worst changes will fall on the more vulnerable populations worldwide. Populations already in danger especially in the desert and arid regions in the tropical belt are especially vulnerable to climatic change. Thus, the call is for immediate and cooperative action, the faster we act the better results we can produce. Thirty years of experience using land imaging satellites show that there are significant societal benefits associated with timely and high quality geospatial data. Application areas such as agriculture, deforestation assessment, disaster monitoring, drought relief and land management, have much to gain from the availability of adequate space-based data.

Despite large successes of global remote sensing programmes and the widespread availability of remotely sensed data there is a knowledge gap when extracting information from images. This knowledge gap has arisen because our capacity for building sophisticated Earth observation satellites is not matched with our means of producing information from these data sources. To a significant extent we are failing to exploit the potential of the spatial data we collect. Much of this knowledge gap has resulted from a substantial imbalance in public expenditure in geoinformation technology. Major Earth observation satellite programmes have budgets in the billion dollar range where the vast majority of money is spent on building and operating the satellites and the sensors. By contrast, the public resources spent in enabling

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users worldwide for making use of such data are a small fraction of what is spent on the space components.

Brazil considers that a change of this status requires the adoption of two concerted actions which are within the areas of action of COPUOS. Global open data access policies and global outreach policies. By global data access we mean a global consortium of \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) imaging satellites which would provide data access by means of a constellation. Data from this constellation would be available, free of charge, to all countries of the world. The \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) imaging satellite constellation would provide 10-30m data global and cover multispectral images, at least once a week or if possible every two days. Such capabilities would meet the need of developing countries for fast response application which are critical in all areas.

Might we add. Is this conception of a global open data access a dream? Brazil believes that it can be done, together with China our main partner in space, we are taking significant steps in this direction. China and Brazil have a joint programme called CBERS, which stands for China Brazil Earth Resources Satellites. The CBERS satellites are designed for global coverage and include multispectral cameras to make optical observations. Currently, the CBERS programme includes five satellites, CBERS-1 which was launched in 1999 and operations ended in 2003, CBERS-2 which was launched in 2003 and is fully operational today, CBERS-2B to be launched in September of this year, CBERS-3 to be launched in 2009 and CBERS-4 to be launched in 2011. China and Brazil consider that CBERS data is a public good thus, we have adopted open data distribution policy procedures. CBERS images are available on the Internet, free of charge to all users in China and in South America. Currently, CBERS is the most widely available remote sensing satellite worldwide. Brazil alone has distributed more than 300,000 images since 2004 to its users in South America. Brazil and China have recently agreed on a far-reaching proposal for building a no-cost data distribution framework for CBERS data to the African countries. By this proposal, the two existing Landsat ground stations that cover most of Africa, Las Palomas in the Canary Islands and Hartebeesthoek in South Africa, will be upgraded to receive CBERS data. This will allow Spain and South Africa to receive CBERS data free of any charge and redistribute them freely to the more than 20 African countries that are within the visibility circle of these two ground stations. The CBERS free data distribution policy is considered to be an example to other nations. Already it is influencing the way the future based space

observation programmes are being planned. The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), which is represented here as an observer, is defining a series of constellations one of these constellations is the Land Surface Imaging Constellation. CEOS is trying to find ways in how about existing and future land imaging systems can accomplish tangible benefits to society. Within CEOS there is a growing awareness that the most productive way forward is a free and open data policy for space-based Earth observation data.

Despite progress in forums such as CEOS there is a need for a forum where the global issues related to data policy are voiced on an equitable basis and this forum is the United Nations. COPUOS has thus a significant role to play by making strong recommendations on data policies for Earth observation data that benefit the world as a whole. But the whole of COPUOS on the matter of promoting the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development would be incomplete if it addressed only data policies.

There is a second issue which is extremely important, capacity building on the use of space-based geospatial data. Space-based data comes in different blends of multispectral, multi-resolution and multi-temporal data. To be truly useful this data needs to be merged with ground-based observations and surveys. How can we make use of such diverse data for sustainable development? Brazil's proposed policy for COPUOS is supporting a globally distributed open source software network. We need to build a global collaborative network of users and developers of open source software that can address the information needs of developing nations. Addressing these challenges is not merely a quest for increasingly sophisticated technical solutions but to identify and engage in approaches that take into consideration the complexity and heterogeneity of different communities. With such cooperation and support mechanisms we can develop networks of actions which are sustainable.

Brazil is actively engaged in capacity building activities in space-based Earth observations including, co-hosting with Mexico, the United Nations Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology for the Latin American and Caribbean. Co-chairing with Spain the capacity building coordination of the Executive Committee of the Group on Earth Observation. Developing a suite of open source software products for interpretation and analysis of geospatial data. One of our software so called \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) has versions in Spanish, Portuguese and English and has been downloaded by more than 100,000 users

worldwide. Working together with international partners to build a global network of developers in open source software for Geographic Information Systems. Increasingly, open source software is being acknowledged as a key engine to bridge the digital divide. Open source software represents a \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) shift in how information technologies are used in developing countries.

The combination of open data access and open source software is the best way to combine the efforts of developed and developing nations to fully promote the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. Brazil is working very hard with its partners to support these goals. We applaud the efforts of COPUOS to engage in this discussion and hope that the free data and free data software is adopted as a major COPUOS policy. We thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to address the plenary on such an important issue.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Camara for that statement coming from a country that is very active in terms of the use of data particularly imagery data from space for many years now with recognized expertise.

Any additional statements please from delegations, still on 12?

I call on our distinguished representative of Japan.

**Mr. S. YAMAKAWA** (Japan): Thank you for giving me the floor. We believe that the \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) of this agenda is to promote activities of the Earth observation data both in advanced countries and in developing countries as well as to train human resources in the field of Earth observation data use in order to expand the possibilities of space use. As for the Japanese Exploration Space Agency (JAXA), the Agency has again demonstrated the dedication to promoting space education and human resource training in the field of Earth observation by conducting a pilot project with authorities in Thailand and Indonesia. In addition, in cooperation with the Asian Institute of Technology and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has implemented a training programme on Earth observation data and \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) technology. More than 1,000 specialists from 40 countries including the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean region have completed the programme and we believe they are playing a significant role in the field of space application. In addition, this issue is one of the vital agenda in the

Asia Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSF), jointly held by Japan \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) every year and we hope that this issue will be \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) through international cooperation. Thank you very much for your attention.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished colleague, speaking on education in Japan, for that statement. I also have a request from Ambassador Raimundo González.

**Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT** (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This is merely intended to congratulate the Brazilian delegation because that presentation was substantial and useful and it adds quite a lot of content to a set of issues which, my country believes, is particularly important because there is a privileged relationship at this point in time, well there always has been but especially now, between the governments of Chile and Brazil and it also reflects integration in Latin America from the Brazilian and the Chilean side.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. González, for that statement and your support for the statement made by our distinguished Brazilian colleague.

I next call on the representative of Syria.

**Mr. O. AMMAR** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The presentation of the distinguished representative of Brazil is worthy of laud and respect and Brazil is worthy of our gratitude for this excellent project as presented by the distinguished representative of Brazil. We hope that Brazil and China will be emulated by the other countries that do possess such technologies. Space technologies are not a luxury they are an urgent need. There may be a need for development in some countries but they do contribute in one way or another to the solution of common problems. Environment, for example, is what holds us all together and we have a saying, if each person cleans before his own house then the whole street will become clean. Therefore it is very useful to provide such data to all countries and this is in light of what has been requested in the morning session. I hope that COPUOS will work to put in place a mechanism, in cooperation with those countries that have such technology, to allow these data to be made available to all countries so that they may enhance their developmental programmes and solve their common problems.

This contributes as well to the mitigation of space debris. There are certain countries that seek to own satellites that may not be developed but are

necessary for the needs of these countries therefore when the data is made available, easily and accessible to all countries, then there shall be no justification among certain countries to have additional satellites in space and add to space debris. Therefore we would thus have contributed scientifically to assist those countries that do not possess such technology and at the same time contributed to mitigating space debris in space orbit. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished colleague, the representative of Syria for that statement.

I call on Greece.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): First, I would like to thank and congratulate our Brazilian colleague for his statement. I retained a need, that the colleague from Syria has just mentioned, in other terms that the cost of access to data provided by geospatial techniques and, by the way, this was mentioned in the Legal Subcommittee which was of much concern, the cost, we have to review, reconsider and redesign a system that dates back to the mid-nineteenth century and that governs copyright and royalties. As I had occasion to say, last April, you cannot accept that highly developed countries pay the same amount for such rights as developing countries, or those with very restricted resources. This a true challenge, in terms of the establishment, it covers copyright and royalties and so on and so forth but, economic speculation with data that, after all, are owned by mankind as a whole because it is via space, after all, that we have acquired these data. Perhaps I should say that this is an aspect that deserves our attention in the Legal Subcommittee in any event, we also have to see that whenever the legal experts, scientists and engineers find themselves together, as is the case here, it is the proper time to refer to this issue but it is a very important issue for the developing countries, there should be free access, free of cost for developing countries or perhaps merely a contribution to the operating expenditure but not in the form of copyright or royalties.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you distinguished representative of Greece on this particular item. It is my understanding that, in the GEO group, issues having to do with policies governing access to data and information was discussed at great length and, since we are fortunate in having here the observer from the GEO Secretariat, Mr. Rum, I wonder whether he could possibly shed some light or at least bring some information to our attention in regard of policy as defined now by GEO.

Mr. Rum, I am sorry I have not given you advanced warning.

**Mr. G. RUM** (Group on Earth Observations): I am really grateful to you that allows me to report briefly on the latest developments of this very important issue. As you probably know, in the ten-year implementation plan that is at the basis of GEO activities, there are very clear data sharing principles. I take the opportunity to read them. There will be full and open exchange of data, metadata and products within GEOS recognizing relevant international instruments and national policies and legislation; all shared data, metadata and products would be made available with minimum time delay and at the minimum cost; all shared data, metadata and products free of charge or no more than cost of reproduction will be encouraged for research and education. These are the principles to which GEO should respond and make \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) on implementation.

A short progress. Where do we stand? There is an active working group on that and it is expected that, by end of the year on the occasion of the GEO Ministerial Summit, what we can call a white paper on furthering the practical application of the agreed data sharing principles, recommended guidelines for GEOS data policies will be produced for discussion and review during the Summit. I think this gives you the idea that really this is one of the key issues within GEO and on our next steps.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Rum, for providing us with that information on the way in which the GEO group is tackling this issue. I would like to recall that the Ministerial Summit of GEO will take place in Capetown in South Africa at the end of November this year. That confirms what we have been saying yesterday and this morning that it is desirable to have strong interaction between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and organizations such as GEO which deal with the same matters in an international context albeit which is a little different but where the same countries are participating and doing so in a very active way.

Any further comments on this item?

Distinguished delegate of Canada has the floor.

**Ms. A-M. Lan PHAN** (Canada): Our delegation would like to remind the Committee that, at the COPUOS meeting last year, the Canadian delegation and others expressed the view that the

subject raised by the Brazilian delegation could lead to duplication of efforts and possibly dilute actions undertaken by international and regional institutions such as the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI), the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas (PCSDIA) and the Committee on Development Information.

Canada, as an official member of the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas, we do participate actively to some annual meetings and have several activities. Many examples of activities are available and I would like to raise the point that Canada has consistently upheld its commitments pursuant to the 1986 principle including by ensuring access to data at reasonable cost for sensed States and the provision of data in the context of disaster management. The RadarSat-1 satellite has been in operation since 1995 and Canada has never received \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) from an agreed sense State.

The new Canadian Remote Sensing Space System Act established a balance between these commitments and the necessity for some measure of the Government of Canada control over remote sensing data and data products in order to protect national security, national defence and foreign policy interest.

[*continued in French*]

I would like to conclude my statement by pointing out that our delegation strongly hails cooperation which Brazil undertakes with China especially for CBERS but, however, we think there are existing mechanisms bilaterally, regionally or through GEO which have just been referred to and those activities are bearing fruit. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you delegation of Canada.

I see a request for the floor from the delegation of Brazil. Mr. Camara you have the floor.

**Mr. G. CAMARA** (Brazil): In fact, as has been pointed out by the representative of Canada, there are international organizations which deal with different aspects of data policies and technical aspects of data which include the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure, the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites and GEO but, in fact, there is no other forum than COPUOS where nations are represented in an equitable way and can express their views on issues which affect us all. Other forums are important, necessary and Brazil actively participates in those forums but they cannot be a decisive forum on the

context of the United Nations system. Therefore I think it is entirely appropriate that the issue of access to geospatial data is addressed by COPUOS and COPUOS makes statements where this issue should lead in terms of data policies worldwide.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished representative of Brazil for his statement. Perhaps I could just make a semantic comment. Often, when we talk about these questions, I sense there is a confusion between geospatial on the one hand which is geographical in nature and then data of geospatial origin, that confusion does not facilitate the discussion. Many international bodies discussing standardization, exchange of data, access to geographical data and optically interested in data of space origin and we are a committee for the peaceful uses of outer space so it is only natural for us to focus on space-derived data. It is a good thing for delegations to keep in mind this clear distinction, what we are talking about here is geographical data which are space derived or extracted from space-derived data. Having made that clarification, which is a semantic one, I would like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Chile.

**Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT** (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Just again to express agreement with what has been said, with crystal-clear lucidity, by the distinguished representative of Brazil. COPUOS is the body designated by the General Assembly of the United Nations to deal with these issues, without detriment to other bodies being involved as well, but they do not have the same political backing, the same planetary coverage as the United Nations especially as far as the developing countries are concerned but, through you, I would like to make a second point.

That is to ask Canada a question. She said that there are principles which were adopted in 1986, here in this Committee. If you think that between 1986 and 2007, that is 21 years since, there has been no evolution in technology then perhaps she would like to say if that is the case.

Second, does the Canadian delegation allow for the forwarding or transfer of processed data, not primary data but processed data, to developing countries?

Thirdly, does Canadian legislation, as is usually the case with all the developed countries present here, have serious restrictions when it comes to

questions of national security for transfer and dissemination of data to the developing countries.

If Canada is an exception then I would be over the moon so to speak, if that were the answer to this question. I do not know Canadian legislation, I am not familiar with it, but I do ask the question. Could the Canadian delegate, in this plenary assure me, first of all that I will get updated data in 2007, should there be an agreement between her country and my country and data on my territory, of course, not data about the territory of Canada of course and are those processed data? Thirdly, is there any legal restriction in national or international law preventing the transfer of that data to Chile. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished representative of Chile for that statement and for the questions which you have asked. I turn towards the distinguished representative of Canada to see if she would like to answer those questions or at least one or two of them.

**Ms. A-M. Lan PHAN** (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): To answer the first question from Ambassador González of Chile. I have to point out that, obviously space technology has evolved since 1986 and we are very well placed to know that, however, as I pointed out in my statement, these are principles and we issued those principles in the context of natural disasters. As you know, we are involved in the International Charter of Natural Disasters are data available through RadarSat-1. Of course we acknowledge receipt of requests from countries requesting such data for natural disasters.

If I have understood correctly you are asking about Canadian legislation as well, as to whether it is as stringent as most other legislations. Well, I am no lawyer but perhaps I could answer by saying that it would be for the delegates here to express what their national policies are. What I have to say about us is that we have a Remote Sensing System Act which was devised to strike a balance between our commitments and our requirements for monitoring or controlling remote sensing data in order to protect national security as well as the country's defence. What I am trying to explain is that we have this national policy, it is for other delegates from other nations, present here, to point out whether our legislation is standard practice but I think we probably are. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished representative and colleague from Canada for those clarifications. I would now like to turn to other delegations that have not

taken the floor and that might wish to speak to this item 12 of the agenda. My personal feeling is that this is the first year of a three-year work plan which was adopted last year at the plenary of the Committee. This first year was devoted to a review of the situation, let us say, with respect to geospatial data to see what the state of play is today, what are the international fora in which those matters are discussed. We have seen that those fora, CEOS, GEO, Spatial Data Infrastructure as well as our Committee of course. I am not sure we can go much further this year in what is year one of the work plan. I think the conclusion which we could perhaps reach is that next year we will come to point two in the work plan as it was adopted last year.

Any comments or remarks on this issue?

The distinguished representative of Greece, Mr. Cassapoglou.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for your conclusions, we wholeheartedly agree with them but I cannot resist the temptation to say a couple of words. We cannot grapple with these problems we have referred to which are both institutional and regulatory, at least we would not have to grapple with them if we had an intergovernmental international space organization and if Greece's proposal, which has been in abeyance ever since 1996, on turning the principles on remote sensing into an international treaty had been dealt with as well because that could have resolved the problem. It would involve the negotiation and then conclusion of a treaty thereby, we could take proper account of these new situations as a result of geopolitical and technological developments in the meantime. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Cassapoglou, for your recollection of Greece's proposal of 1996. However, that proposal was not adopted at the time, I am not familiar with the context that prevailed then but today we are dealing with States present here, each and everyone of which has its own regulations for space data. In our Committee we are endeavouring to reach a consensus and some common ground on certain things but we are also realists as delegates, we know that States have their own policies which, sometimes, involve the establishment of a legislative framework, indeed Canada has just referred to it, it is also the case in other countries too. That legislative framework enshrines the rules of the game, so to speak, for the establishment and of course exploitation of space systems, telecommunication, navigation, observation and sometimes scientific research systems and it is to

take account of those national policies that each State of course has, it is to take account of the States' policies that the Committee tries to achieve a consensus but it takes time but we do need to be realistic. That is why I would recall, as I did earlier, that this agenda item was approved in the form of a project which has spanned three phases. The first is just to take stock of the question. The statement from our distinguished colleague from Brazil, let us face it, goes a little further than just taking stock because it provides a very measured approach for broad and very free and developed access to space-derived data. We can only take note of that today but I think the debate must continue next year in keeping with the work plan which was adopted last year.

If there are no further statements on this item then I think we will leave it at that and move on to item 13. We will come back to 7 a little later, once the Director of OOSA has come back.

Under item 13, I do not actually have any speakers as things stand at least here is no registered requests for the floor from a delegation or from an observer.

I see a request for the floor from Venezuela.

#### **Other matters (agenda item 13)**

**Ms. N. ORIHUELA-GUEVARA** (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Could you tell us which part of item 13 we are discussing? Is this the observer issue?

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): For the time being we have only just re-opened item 13 and I was just taking a look with the Secretariat to see if we can propose some conclusions about the first part of item 13 which is the future activities of the Committee and then perhaps, after that, we could come to the observers issue, that is the question of admission of observers.

So, on the future activities of the Committee, as we said this morning, with the help of the Secretariat we have been trying to produce a summary of the debate which took place under item 13, on this specific issue, one which as best as possible would take on board all of the statements made either yesterday or this morning which would involve conclusions or, indeed, confirmation of action underway in the report of the Committee but also be specifically reflected in the agenda of this subcommittee and the Committee as a whole.

There are two strong thrusts which emerged. The first, which was extremely clearly explained by our colleague from Algeria this morning, was to seek to ensure that developing countries are involved very closely in all the reflection which is underway for the short, medium or long term, on matters which today may not be priority number one but which are of concern to them because they pertain to the future of space activities in general. In pursuit of the work which the Committee has been doing it would be space exploration, it would cover the concept of a protected area, other celestial bodies such as the Moon, the Sun and so on and then also the question of the legal consequences stemming from the question of transportation of passengers into space. As our distinguished colleague from Algeria recalled this morning, these are matters which may not have enjoyed the highest priority for developing countries but when you really think about them in the longer term then you quickly realize that they are just as concerned as everybody else by them. So, we must develop a mechanism which would involve them directly in the whole exercise of thinking and reflection which may take place over the next few years.

For example, when there is a suggestion that we make use of the expertise available in international associations such as the International Astronautical Federation, World Space Research Institute, the Space Law Institute and so on. In those cases we need to make sure that those institutions are vigilant and involve experts coming from the developing countries in their deliberations. That is a very clear-cut message which we can convey to them through OOSA. That is the first strong thrust emerging from the statements.

The second one, especially thanks to the statement by our distinguished colleague Mr. Kopal from the Czech Republic, that we should seek to ensure that the Legal Subcommittee, whenever relevant, should be involved in reflection on various issues which have a legal dimension or which will have a legal dimension. Which means virtually all the activities because just about everything has a legal dimension. So we need to ensure that the Legal Subcommittee is involved in such thinking. As I said yesterday, the fact that our colleague the distinguished colleague from the Czech Republic, Mr. Kopal, should be the Chair of the Legal Subcommittee over the next two years is, to some extent, a guarantee that this will not be lost sight of.

These are the two main thrusts which I detected then there was more specific comments, specific that is to each of the various fields which are addressed in document L.268 and of course also in

drafting the conclusions which we and the Secretariat are preparing, so those too will be incorporated as best as possible in the text and we will have a look at that tomorrow morning.

I see the United States asking for the floor.

**Mr. K. HODGKINS** (United States of America): As I indicated this morning we do have several specific comments regarding your paper and, with your permission, I can go through those now or later, I am in your hands.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Hodgkins, I think the best thing would be for you to make those comments now.

**Mr. K. HODGKINS** (United States of America): As I had indicated yesterday, we consider this paper generally to be an outstanding effort on your part and we do hope that we can reach agreement at this session, that this paper could serve as a basis for further discussions either in the Subcommittees or in the full Committee concerning our future work.

Your proposals on section A regarding the space systems and their contribution to a better understanding of the Earth we consider to be quite sensible and we could support further action along the lines of what you have suggested.

In section B, regarding the coordination of Global Navigation Satellite Systems, generally we agree with your recommendations although we do share the view expressed by the delegation from the Russian Federation concerning the legal aspects of the work that the ICG is engaged in. ICG is not organized in such a way to consider any legal issues that might arise concerning GNSS.

In section C, contribution of satellite technology to sustainable development. Again we have no objections to what you have suggested for future work, however, we did have one question concerning paragraph 23, in the last sentence where there is reference to the Committee constantly updating a database of successful applications to illustrate the many contributions of space technology to sustainable development. Our question is, whether this is a database that will be maintained by the Committee or is there already a database some place out there that we would contribute to. We think it is probably a good idea for more elaboration on exactly what you had in mind and who would maintain this and how it would be maintained, that would be helpful.

Concerning the long-term sustainability of space activities. This item, we believe, holds a great deal of promise but it has to be approached in a very pragmatic and focused way because there are a lot of issues involved in here that deal with space operations. It can be highly complicated and we just have to identify those areas where the Subcommittee could make a unique contribution to the overall exercise, so we share the view that was expressed by several other delegations that our first step should be to examine what the specific aspects would be of our consideration for this item, what exactly would we hope to accomplish in the end and what products would we like to produce.

On the international cooperation in space exploration, we had a very good panel discussion last week on the overall strategy for exploration and we consider it to be quite useful for the Committee to look at ways in which we could encourage greater participation in exploration among developing countries.

The matter of the protection and conservation of designated areas of the Moon and other bodies of the solar system. This probably lends itself well to an examination by COSPAR and IAA but there will be issues that only the governments can consider as they relate to the Outer Space Treaty and other legal instruments.

Concerning passenger space transport. What we envisage under this item is not so much talking about technical or legal standards at this stage but having more of an information exchange so that delegations understand better what the plans are for so-called passenger space transport. We could see, over the next few years, it may be a single issue item on this matter where we just exchange information or we ask entities who are involved in this sort of activity to come and brief the Committee or the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee so we better understand the plans and the implications for the future.

Finally on near Earth objects. Right now we have a multi-year work plan, once that is completed then perhaps we can consider what further actions to take.

I have one other general comment. The paper, and rightly so, does raise the possibility of having greater involvement by non-governmental entities and expert groups to look at some of these issues and we would fully support. The only cautionary note that my delegation wants to add to this is these reports. We would expect to deal with expert issues in a way that



only experts can deal with. That is to say, there are clearly some political issues in this Committee where we have been unable to reach consensus on. So, we would not expect that these reports would re-hash those sorts of issues, that is to say, what we should seek is reports from these expert organizations to give us something that we cannot already give ourselves. It does not take a great deal of imagination to look at some of these questions that you have raised in your paper where there are expert types of issues and then there are political types of issues. I do not need advice on the political side, I need advice on the expert side. So I am not criticizing these organizations up front but I think for our purposes we have to be very clear when we ask these groups to participate and to provide us with their views that we give to them specific guidance on exactly what we are looking at and not make them guess what it is that we are seeking.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Hodgkins, for those comments. I think I am in a position to answer the one question you put on C.

You were wondering who would maintain the database which is mentioned there. Well, the term database is perhaps a little too clear-cut. It was a concept whereby the Secretariat would have a file, perhaps a dossier or a file is a more appropriate term, state of the art in terms of space applications. That file would enable the Secretariat to be in the best possible position to provide contributions wherever those are called for. For the sustainable development group for example and on whatever is being discussed in the Committee. So perhaps database is too technical a term selected, more than what we intended to say in this paragraph. There are databases virtually everywhere in the world and the Secretariat can of course access those. It is not really an issue of creating a new one.

On the subject of the general comment you made towards the end of your statement. It is, indeed, clear that of the various items and subjects in this document there is mention made of international organizations, ITU being one or ICEO another and this is because they have expertise. Expertise that they can bring in but it is for this Committee to decide we are still in control of all the activities and discussions. I had occasion to discuss this issue with Mr. Valery Timofeev, who was in attendance these last two days, responsible for the Office for Radiocommunications and I told him precisely that, if advisory groups initially are set up to consider these issues under space operations and how to manage those, how to avoid problems, coordination of global navigation, ITU could certainly contribute expertise and it is as an expert

organization that they would be invited to attend if applicable. So let us have this perfectly clear, this is not a joint committee with ITU, it is a space committee calling for expertise which is available in NGOs but also in a number of government institutions and specialized organizations of the United Nations family such as the case for ITU. That was the concept. Yet again it is obvious that on this issue delegations having taken the floor would like a step by step cautious approach which will probably require additional consultations during the months to come, possibly years to come, before it formally gets on to the agenda.

I next call on our distinguished representative from Venezuela.

**Ms. N. ORIHUELA-GUEVARA** (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Two brief comments if I may. Generally speaking, the summary that you have been providing reflects my statement yesterday to a large extent but there are two aspects that are not included. The first one on paragraph 8 where I was saying yesterday and confirm that today that I believe and the Venezuelan delegation believes that the whole issue is in itself very important, this is reflected, of course, in paragraph 8, it is a second level of importance, the first priority which is work between organizations or pooling effort. As I said yesterday, I would like to have us consider that this is a specific item, this should be a special item for future work.

On F now. This morning one of the statements made also made reference to what I said yesterday. For our delegation, before we do any delimitation on the Moon or other bodies of the solar system, it would be of interest to have consideration of the impact of man's activity in that area.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished representative of Venezuela and let me reassure her straight away. The choice of words in the Committee's report will bear that in mind. What I was doing earlier on was an attempt to give you a general summing up without going into any greater detail but, of course, in the report which is being drafted at this point in time, we will have every occasion to faithfully reflect specific statements made on individual items and particularly on the latter one. That is noted.

Now, on nuclear sources in space. Since there is no mention in the subsequent text I will have to study how we will be reflecting that.

Next, we have a request to speak from our colleague, the representative of Chile.

**Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT** (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Also, on your summing up, I would like to say the following. I am not so sure that we have fully reflected the overall trends. It is clear that this exercise is a difficult one, we made a long, long statement on that particular issue and it is my impression that some of the items made and points were not reflected. Let me say here and now, that I disagree with the distinguished representative of the United States in respect of space transport and the significance of this in terms of considering this in the future, for my country that is not really relevant. For my country and I hope this will be reflected in the document because what is not sufficiently underlined is space applications now, today, and that is why I would like to put some questions to the distinguished representative of Canada.

There is new legislation, the National Space Policy of the United States and there are developments elsewhere in developed countries placing restrictions on access to data that are retained by countries in possession of resources. That is the whole concept of sustainable development. One of the delegations yesterday said that it was very difficult to take a stance on sustainability of space activities. Today that very same delegation referred at length to the plans and projects they had, saying that they are part of sustainable development. I do not know whether miracles happen from one day to the next or there is a sudden revelation on the subject but I think this is important. Unfortunately when I say we, my country, I certainly will not speak for any other country, cannot exercise the luxury, the pleasure, almost philosophical in terms, to even dream of travel in outer space. We have every day real problems, vulnerable population groups affected by the phenomenon of El Niño that have to move 100 km further in order to avoid flooding, have educational problems. It is here and now that we have to address these issues, so it is an irony, to a certain extent, that we are devoting time to space transport or space travel and whatever else there is. This would not really go down well in my country, we have so many other pressing social issues to solve.

Having said that, I would like to make reference here to the last part of the last paragraph, I should say precisely the last portion of the statement made by the distinguished representative of Venezuela, on the need to give our attention to the impact. I stand to be corrected by her of course but I think she said the impact of space activities on the space environment and there we can go along with her.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. González, for that statement which confirms the points you made yesterday. On my list I furthermore have a request for the floor from Brazil, followed by Cuba. Brazil first please.

**Mr. L. IANSEN DE SANTANA** (Brazil): First of all I would like to thank you, the staff also in other parts of \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) institutions for the elaboration of the document on the future role and activities of COPUOS. In general terms, my delegation believes that this document contains valid suggestions for the future work of this Committee. Having said that, my delegation is of the view that a similar consultation process might benefit from enhanced transparency including, perhaps, the designation of focal points from member States so as to guarantee wider participation and inputs.

My delegation would like also to convey a few comments on some of the areas included in the document we have before us. Concerning item A, contribution of space systems to a better understanding and to global monitoring of the planet Earth. In view of the invaluable contribution of space technology to the understanding and monitoring of the planet Earth, Brazil fully supports the suggestion that COPUOS should invite the Director of the Secretariat of the International Group on Earth Observation (GEO) to report annually to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the implementation of the work plan of GEO for the operation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. By contributing to a regular interaction between the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and GEO suggested, would certainly facilitate the debate by this Committee on actions to encourage and facilitate the use of space systems to understand and monitor the changes affecting the planet Earth and to help develop a collective strategy to mitigate global warming.

In addition, Brazil believes that, in order to respond to the challenges posed by global warming especially from the perspective of developing countries, COPUOS should continue to promote international cooperation for capacity building for the use of space-derived geospatial data in line with the discussions we held today under agenda item 12.

Contribution concerning item C, contribution of satellite technology for sustainable development. Brazil also supports this suggested decision in view of the great importance we attach to the coordination between COPUOS and the Commission for Sustainable Development. The presentations to be offered by the invited experts should provide fruitful debates at

COPUOS and constitute opportunities to promote capacity building in the use of space applications among developing countries. In this connection, my delegation are particularly keen on the recommendation to give priority to speakers from the developing countries and to the practical applications of space science and technology, including at the regional level.

Finally, concerning the item long term sustainability of space activities. Brazil acknowledges the importance and complexity of this matter and believes that further consideration is necessary before adopting a decision on a new agenda item for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. Analysis of the rules of the road for future space operations and on the establishment of a working group on the subject. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the representative of Brazil for those comments and suggestions and I would next call on the representative of Cuba.

**Mr. J. FERNANDEZ** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My comments shall be very brief. I would like to say that we support the comments made on space transport by Chile and those comments should, in my opinion, appear in the document which is now discussion because that is one thing that we fully share and also give our support to the comments made by the Venezuelan delegation on those topics recently discussed, that is the Moon, a topic that deserves our attention and consideration. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank our distinguished colleague the delegate of Cuba.

Any additional statements please on this item?  
I see none.

That lets us conclude on 13, it being understood that, between now and tomorrow morning with the Secretariat, we will do our utmost to include in the report of the Committee all the elements that were brought to our attention on this.

Still on 13. I think it was either this morning or in the early afternoon that our distinguished representative of Chile wished to revert to the issue, briefly, which is the request for membership in the capacity of an observer of an organization that we have discussed at great length over these past days.

I call on Ambassador González.

**Mr. R. GONZÁLEZ-ANINAT** (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has provided concrete and objective evidence of our absolute autonomy and non-ideological approach in terms of dealing with the issues before this Committee and we intend to maintain that stance because it is in the interests of international cooperation. In that general context, which we think is a subjective element, the topic of observers may represent a dangerous situation whereby it would set a precedent and this, for those who might object to an observer any time in the future, might in fact be confronted with this. We, on the contrary, would like to assure each and every observer of any country of the world and any NGO and, more particularly those of developing countries and countries where we share many elements in common such as seeking to bring about Latin American integration, assure them of adequate participation in the activities of this Committee especially if they comply with our requirements and when there is no legal basis for a rejection *a priori* of such participation or no legal basis *a priori* to accept the application of another. Either we let them all in or we turn them all away. Bearing in mind the fact that observers must comply with the central basic objectives of this Committee. So I would not want to spend more time on the topic, we do not think the topic is in itself very important apart from the context that is. Judging things on their merit, giving them a cooperation slant in terms of what this Committee does and making sure that civil society has participation in the deliberations of this Committee, as is the universally applicable standard and rule throughout the UN system and, as occurs without exception of any sort, at least in all Latin American countries where civil society is playing a growing role. I am unaware of any Latin American country that would, in fact, hamper participation of civil society and I am proud to be the representative of a Latin American country also for this reason. I am merely mentioning Latin America because a controversy has appeared with another Latin American country on this issue. Obviously other countries have mechanisms duly designed to take care of this but, in the case of Latin America, the presence of civil society and representation of NGOs is a very important matter. So we believe that any element that would set aside an NGO, exclude them, not even from a legal point of view but one practical in nature, is really counter-productive and, having said that, it might create an escalation which will obviously not be a problem for Chile, we will never contribute to this but, nobody can exclude a situation whereby there could be a spiralling situation or an escalation in that some NGOs would be accepted and others would be turned down. Which, as we say, we could have

arguments at this point time that could be turned around the next time around.

This is the last statement we intend to make on the topic. We merely want to clearly state that in the context of this plenary a formal invitation to participate in FIDAE for the Secure World Foundation has now been extended. They have had a chance to participate though they do not, in theory, yet possess the quality of an observer or the status. They took part in discussions yesterday and I think that was one way of giving validity to that \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*). I reiterate the invitation extended to that NGO and all other NGOs of a similar purpose and nature if they can visit our continent to attend this event. Of course, I particularly welcome those from our continent but I welcome those of other continents as well. So, we have decided to have regional cooperation systems in Latin America and we also want to have interregional dialogue on the issues and problems that have a bearing on humankind and, as Brazil was saying, basically the whole issue of climate change on the global scale which, as you know Mr. Chairman, is in line with the Chilean initiative to have a symposium to be held in the context of the next Legal Subcommittee meeting. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. González for that statement. This is an item that I would not wish to spend too much time on but I do have requests for the floor from Venezuela and then the United States and then China. Venezuela first please.

**Ms. N. ORIHUELA-GUEVARA** (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am reading now the statement from Venezuela which I am going to ask to be included in the minutes, item 13 of the matter of observers.

In 1990, the Committee considered certain guidelines for granting, to non-governmental organizations, status of observers within its ranks, some criteria to regulate and govern their entry and consequently to become part of the Committee. In a few words, these are conditions for entry as read in the report of the Secretariat handed over to this session from 6-15 June 2007.

In keeping with this, it is pointed out in paragraph 2 of this note that, in future because we are talking about a document for the future, the non-governmental organizations wishing to have the status of observers for this Committee should enjoy that status in the Economic and Social Council, a situation which the representative of the Secure World Foundation indicated was not the case until now. In

this case according to which, the Committee would be acting in a way which is not consistent with its own rules if it were to accept this organization. Custom has tended to be viewed as a source of law as long as it does not contravene our actual rules. We are talking about an association which is related to issues which have been discussed in various committees and subcommittees of this organization. In the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its session of February 2007 under point 6, there is an index referring to participation, reflecting the representation of observers. The European Astronomical Research Organization of the Southern Hemisphere attended the meeting and requested the status of permanent observer to the Committee, that is in CRP.8. In keeping with the report submitted by the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-fifth session held in Vienna from 26 March to 5 April 2007 it says in chapter I, introduction, section C, attendance, number 7, it refers to the intergovernmental organizations which were represented. The Subcommittee took note of the request for observer status presented by the African Cartography and Remote Sensing Organization, that is CRP.3. In keeping with the programme of this session and other matters, under the observer issue, it says the Committee adopted a decision on the various requests made at the session. It is clear from what has been stated that, neither in the Legal Subcommittee nor in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee nor in the programme or agenda given to our diplomatic mission so that our country could prepare its delegation for this meeting, was there an express request from this Foundation to attend or to be admitted to a status as observers.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the idea here is to include a non-governmental organization without meeting the minimum requirements previously set down. Which means that, under article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, it says to be a member of this organization States must meet the minimum requirements as set forth therein. So what is valid for a country should be even more valid for a body of a different nature. In the light of this, this delegation repeats what it said in previous meetings according to which the entry of this Foundation as an observer should be examined and deferred to a subsequent session so that it is tackled at the next session of the Committee as long as, by that date, the requirements demanded are actually met. Thank you.

[The interpreter would like to point out that this is a highly detailed text which was not given to the interpreter's beforehand.]

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished representative of Venezuela. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United States.

**Mr. K. HODGKINS** (United States of America): I had shared with the Committee our views when this item first arose but I would like to reiterate those views. First, I think it is extremely unfortunate that we are having this debate. The Secure World Foundation's credentials should never have been questioned by member States and I think that some of the objections that are being raised as to their status as observer or decision to be observer, to be made at this session, really do not hold much water.

First, as far as we can tell, the Safe World Foundation has complied with the guidelines that we laid down in 1990 and we agreed on guidelines precisely to avoid this sort of debate.

The second thing is, the question of seeking observer status in ECOSOC is not a prerequisite. The language in their letter is exactly what has been used by other NGOs in the past, which is we will seek status within ECOSOC it is not a prerequisite that is to say you do not need to first be recognized by ECOSOC and then you can come to the Committee. Now, if I am mistaken, I am more than happy to be corrected but the language in their application to the Committee is, as far as I can tell, exactly what has been used in the past by other non-governmental organizations seeking observer status in the Committee.

I remain concerned as well, that we are setting a precedent here where we are deferring decisions on matters that we have not deferred before. So now we are going to set up a situation where an observer or an NGO will come in to request observer status and then we have the option of deferring or making the immediate decision and that was never actually part of the process.

Finally, I do want everyone to recall my intervention this morning regarding the inspectors report contained in CRP.3, paragraph 18. It is very clear, the inspectors believe that there is a great unexplored opportunity in developing partnership with the private sectors as a resource multiplier for OOSA. This cannot happen on its own, it has to take specific action and one of the ways of generating this sort of interest and the possibility of tapping into new resources is to encourage non-governmental organizations, whether they are private entities or non-profit, to participate in the work of the Committee, understand what we are doing and perhaps make

contributions to specific activities within the programme of work that COPUOS and its subcommittees. We have here one of our first opportunities, in the form of Safe World Foundation, to take advantage of this possibility where an NGO who wants to be an observer could potentially also be a source of funding or in-kind resources to support the work of the Committee and of OOSA. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Hodgkins, for your statement. I have also noted two other requests, one from Greece and one from Cuba. Could I ask you to restrict your statements just to two minutes each. Sorry, I forgot the delegation of China as well, I am terribly sorry. Distinguished representative of China you asked for the floor as well and I am going to give it to you now.

**Mr. W. ZHANG** (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Mr. Chairman, actually my delegation does not want to spend more time on the discussion of this matter. Unfortunately however, this question has cropped up on the agenda, again we find it difficult to understand. I fully understand what was said by the delegate of Chile. On this question we should not be so ideological while looking at this, we should not politicize this matter. Actually the Chinese delegation is not directed against any NGO while expressing our views. In this regard, we agree with Ambassador González in that what is involved is a matter of precedent. What kind of precedent are we going to see, a good one or a bad one? Here there might be a possibility of two precedents. First the \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) question of this meeting. We \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) that the other day in my statement, my understanding was that the plenary has accepted what was decided by the Chairman in that it would be postponed by one year, I think this is in accordance with the rules and procedures of the General Assembly so that this question should be at an end, so we will wait until the next session. In the meantime, my delegation has taken note, we hope for the postponement instead of the consideration of the application of the status by any organization. Some matters are still waiting to be clarified that is the reason. So, first is the question of a precedent whether we should overthrow what was decided upon by the Chairman or, we create another precedent we have already \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) on something and we re-open this issue for discussion again.

I would like to draw your attention to this matter I have mentioned. This organization, this body has been established by the United Nations General Assembly, it is a solemn body, august body, so we have to pay respect to this status. Secondly, I fully

agree with the delegate of Venezuela in that, we also welcome all NGO as long as the requirements are met, they can participate in the work of this Committee as an observer. I agree with the Ambassador of Chile and also with the view of the United States that, our effort needs the participation of the NGO, the civil society, we need that and this will help the decision making by the governments. In the meantime, since this Committee back in 1990 at the \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) session already came to the decision that there should be some criteria for NGOs to participate in the deliberation of this Committee and it was contained in paragraph 113 of the report of that session. We should work on a consensus basis. We should consider the relevant applications by the NGOs according to the relevant criteria. In this regard, we cannot accept the explanation given by the United States delegate with regard to the criteria. Only in very special circumstances otherwise we should not create any precedent as an exception. After the deliberation by this Committee whether we will come to a decision of criteria, every member State should be obligated to observe and respect the decision with regard to criteria. This is a question of principle we are not directed against any NGO, I clarify one more time. Also with regard to the Safe World Foundation and its application, I think some delegations should also pay attention to the fact that there are some colleagues, delegates, who do not have a full knowledge of this organization, they still have their concerns there are matters that need to have clarification upon. So on our part, we are also aware this Foundation and its activities cover a large range of areas, we need time to listen to clarifications and explanations on the activities of this organization, we need time to understand. In the meantime we can take the opportunity of this time given to wait for this organization to meet the requirement. In the meantime some other concerns of some countries can be satisfied. I do not think it is too much to ask for and this will by no means adversely affect the Safe World Foundation from cooperating with this organization and also bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other countries. We think that the decision made by the Chairman the other day that this matter can be postponed for deliberation until the next session. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for that statement, distinguished representative of China. We still have two further requests for the floor, Greece and Cuba and then I would like to wind up this discussion after those two statements.

Distinguished representative of Greece.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): Notwithstanding the efforts made, since the day before yesterday, to facilitate your task, it seems to be impossible to have a comprehensive consensus. You took a decision to defer this discussion of this candidacy to next year. Of course, I have to draw two distinctions but it \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) about associations and not foundations or organizations, an association but not a foundation. Then there is the question of having an opinion and your opinion was so satisfactory that there was no reason for us to change our mind. Unfortunately, I see for reasons which seem to be more procedural in nature rather scholastic. Again we seem to be faced with the absence of consensus so I wonder whether or not the debate should be continued. I wonder whether it is really so disastrous to wait until next year on condition that the colleague from Venezuela could join us by changing her attitude to the question of entry of this Foundation.

I just wanted to conclude with a legal comment. There is no comparison between the principle for accepting a State and the principle of accepting a non-State entity, that argument is just completely out of order. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you. I now give the floor and then I will stop the list. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Cuba.

**Mr. J. FERNANDEZ** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): After what China and Venezuela have said I will just take a 20 seconds of your time. Firstly, I wish to make it crystal clear that on principle we support the participation of NGOs and civil society in this forum. Secondly, we would like to say that we wholeheartedly support what was said by the distinguished delegate of Venezuela and the distinguished delegate of China. With all due respect to the other positions which have been expressed in this room. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the distinguished delegate of Cuba. The debate we have just had only confirms the situation that prevailed two days ago which had prompted me to conclude that we should adjourn or defer the consideration of the Secure World Foundation's request. So we stick to that conclusion.

With your permission I would like to add just one word to that conclusion by saying the following. There is unanimous opinion amongst all delegations, when all is said and done, that we should facilitate the

participation of civil society in the deliberations of our Committee and, indeed, that unanimous opinion is something we see every year when we open the deliberations of the Committee because systematically we accept requests for participation by States, by non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations which may not yet have permanent observer status and which then requested for the purposes of that session. On that specific point the Committee has always taken a very open minded approach which is very much to its credit. This prompts me to suggest, quite straightforwardly, that with your agreement, of course, I would invite as Chair of the Committee the Secure World Foundation to attend our meeting next year when, of course, we will consider its request for permanent observer status. That does not prejudice any decisions to be taken by the Committee of course under the chairmanship of my successor but I do think that is a gesture which the Committee might make which in no way commits it to whatever final decision it takes next year.

Distinguished delegate of Greece.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): I wholeheartedly agree and I would like to say thank you too because you have taken the words out of my mouth. The only thing I would like to ask you kindly to add, is that this invitation, which you have so rightly made, should also be valid for the two subcommittees and not just the plenary. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to reassure the distinguished delegate of Greece on this point. When I talk about participation of the work of the Committee it was implicit that I was talking about the Committee *per se* and the two subcommittees. As far as I am concerned, the two subcommittees are part of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I am no lawyer but I think that is probably true.

Can we wind up on this conclusion. I see no objection so we leave item 13 thereupon. I would like to thank you for your contributions.

Before I come back to item 7, which now needs to be considered, I would like to inform the Committee of a piece of news which has just come to me. That is the passing of Kurt Waldheim, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Chancellor of Austria. So I would like to extend my condolences to the delegation of Austria which regrettably is not present to hear those condolences. The Secretariat informs me that Kurt Waldheim was

even Chair of this Committee at one time, that is something I was not aware of. So, with your permission, I would like you to join me in extending to Austria an expression of condolence on the passing of Dr. Kurt Waldheim.

Distinguished representatives we now revert to item 7 of the agenda. Before giving the floor to delegations I would like to ask Mr. Camacho, the Director of OOSA, to give us a quick idea of where we stand.

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

**Mr. S. CAMACHO-LARA** (OOSA): I will be very brief in the introduction. As a way of preparing the text that we would include in the report once the Committee has agreed and its consideration of the document that has been in front of the Committee regarding the new programme SPIDER.

What we have done is then to prepare a non-paper that has the draft text, so the entire non-paper is draft text even though it has no brackets except for one paragraph that I will clarify in a moment. Then, after delegations have time to read that paper, we will distribute a second document that is related to the paragraph that is in brackets, which is paragraph 9, and we will distribute that paper also so that you can read it as soon as you finish the non-paper. After that the Secretariat will be very happy to listen to the views of members of the Committee. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Camacho.

Distinguished delegates I think you have now had time to read both documents that have just been distributed in the room and I have Nigeria's request for the floor. Mr. Abiodun please.

**Mr. A. ABIODUN** (Nigeria): Thank you very much for giving me the floor. My contribution is not on SPIDER but it is on agenda item 7.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for pointing that out. I did note that Austria wished to take floor.

**Mr. H. BÖCK** (Austria): Just to respond to the condolences you kindly on your behalf and on behalf of the Committee passed on on the passing away of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations

and former Austrian Federal President, Dr. Kurt Waldheim. We appreciate the condolences very much and they will be duly conveyed. Thank you very much.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I thank our distinguished colleague for that statement. We continue our consideration of SPIDER, an item which is part of item 7 on our agenda. Any comments please from delegations, on both documents that have just been circulated.

I would like to call on the representative of the United States, Mr. Hodgkins.

**Mr. K. HODGKINS** (United States of America): I have a couple of questions and observations to make particularly concerning the note we received from the Director for the Programme Planning and Budget Division.

I am not sure if I have the process correctly and perhaps the Secretariat can clarify this for me. My understanding is that the Office is now in the process of preparing a budget as part of its regular cycle for the biennium 2008-2009. Is that correct?

My understanding is that, as part of the regular budget process, the Office would seek three new posts for the Office which, under any circumstances, that is a sizable request, at least in my experience. What has happened now is that the Office has sought guidance from the Programme Planning and Budget Division before submitting its regular budget. Is that correct? No, ok, then that will be the first point that you need to clarify for me.

The second observation. This is a discussion that we had a year ago and again it comes down to the process that has to be followed, within the General Assembly, concerning the omnibus resolution and the budget impacts. My understanding, for the better part of this week, has been that the plan that we have laid out for 2007 for SPIDER is within the regular budget of OOSA and is being taken care of through rearrangement of priorities as provided for in the General Assembly resolution from last year. It was also my understanding that the report we would adopt this week for COPUOS, that would be reflected in the General Assembly resolution, would not trigger a determination by the Fifth Committee that the resolution itself, that we would consider in the next General Assembly, would not trigger an assessment that the resolution itself would have a budget impact and, that is to say, that the work being mandated through the resolution could not be absorbed through the OOSA regular budget. If it does kick in this budget

impact assessment then it creates a problem for my delegation as well as I think for others, when it comes time for the Fourth Committee to act. Again, if I could get clarification as to whether I have this process correct or not I would appreciate it.

The other observation I have to make is that there should be some assessment either in our final report or in the proposed work plan as contained in CRP.13 and 14. There should be some assessment as to what will happen if these three posts are not approved. We are suggesting here, in paragraph 8 of the non-paper, that in order to provide the dynamic and effective supervision and coordination needed to accept and integrate the different contributions being made by member States to SPIDER, we need three programme coordinators, that is three new posts. Now, what if those posts are not approved? Does this become less dynamic and effective? Do we defer some of the activities? I think there has to be some contingency plan there. Again, in my experience asking for three new posts for one office is a fairly significant request and the last time I dealt with budget people, they are less than accommodating and this one would really stretch even the most generous budget analyst. I think we have to be realistic as to whether, quite aside from my questions concerning the resolution and where member States come \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*), the probability of getting three new posts just strikes me as small but again I could be wrong.

Finally, in the note from the Programme Planning and Budget Division. They suggest that, over the coming months, they will carry out a review of the implications of our report and in a written statement containing a detailed analysis of the programme budget implications would be submitted to the Fourth Committee in time for their consideration of this report and their decisions therein. Well, the outer space item in the Fourth Committee will be taken up towards the end of October. I am not sure when we would get the report from the Budget Division but it certainly is not going to be in time for us to review it as a Committee.

The final question is. What happens if they come back with their assessment and say this is wildly out of synch with what we are trying to do within the UN or they say well, this looks fine, I am just not sure how we are going to be able to deal with the report from the Budget Division that could significantly alter the plans that have been laid out in CRP.13 and CRP.14. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Hodgkins, for that statement



and also the request for clarification for the Director of OOSA. I therefore call on him.

Is this a question of the same sort from Greece? Very well, Greece please.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): Yesterday since we did not have time to discuss this we were therefore not able to consider the draft budget. So we have to come back to this because in this draft budget I noted three P-5s, unless I am mistaken, and could I please get a copy of the slides that the Office showed us. Three P-5s I think. Who is going to pay for this? The budget of the United Nations or national budgets of host countries? What about the remainder of the expenditure because you see the whole exercise, the whole SPIDER project, is intended to assist countries that are hard hit in the event of a disaster. So we do not have the luxury of spending more than necessary, spending extra. That is a general comment but it is also on principle.

Second, I fully associate myself with the views expressed just now by the United States. Then I see in paragraph 8 of the non-paper, may I read in English “three programme coordinators to be located in Beijing, Bonn and Vienna responsible for central management coordination and implementation of the activities” etc. This, to a certain extent, unless there is a misprint somewhere or a mistake in the text, three coordinators. If it was not so serious, the purpose of SPIDER that is, I would be laughing. What are they supposed to do, coordinate their own work! The basic concept that we had a couple of years ago, Greece as you know, has had quite a number of disasters and from the very outset we were part of the action team but at that point in time the main concept was that all efforts should focus on the United Nations Office. The Office does not just coordinate, it really manages and guides and that was the basic purpose of the whole exercise. This is very strange to see that three coordinators are supposed to coordinate what, I ask you? I am of course not an expert in public administration or even management but I think there is a hitch, in terms of logic here, from the organizational point of view could I have some explanation. What about the job description of these three persons, male or female, who are to take on such responsibilities. Will they be civil servants? Employed by the UN? Or, will they be provided, so to speak, by the three governments? Three because Switzerland is also involved, the three host governments and thirdly, what would be the cost element? I may be repeating myself but I associate myself with my colleague from the United States. The Fifth Committee, of course, has to take a decision but first we have to be clear in our

minds as to what these people are going to do. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for that statement. Does the representative of Brazil wish to speak on this very item? Is it intended for clarification of administrative aspects? And Nigeria, I think I saw the name plate up.

**Mr. A. ABIODUN** (Nigeria): I would like Dr. Camacho to answer Mr. Cassapoglou’s question. Are we talking of programme officers or P-5 because with my knowledge of the UN a programme officer does not necessarily translate to a P-5 and therefore, for me, that is just raising the temperature of the discussion by saying P-5. Where have we seen P-5 written anywhere? I do not know where Mr. Cassapoglou got P-5.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I will ask Mr. Camacho to respond in order to clarify these items. Questions were put by our colleague the representative of the United States and also our colleague from Greece. Following which, Colombia still on the same item? Yes, please.

**Mr. C. ARÉVALO-YEPES** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): That is very kind of you. Colombia already expressed its views as to the virtues of SPIDER. There is no doubt that we need this system but we do have some concerns on the non-paper and it is important to clarify these concerns.

Paragraph 6, towards the end it says, that in particular the Committee notes that the extrabudgetary resources being offered by the Governments of Austria, China, Germany and Switzerland included professional staff. This means professionals that will take on these duties. So my first question is. How does that tie in with the fact that, in paragraph 8, we see language to the effect that with the budget of the Office, three P-5s, it does not say that in the text but I have just heard it that these are to be P-5, that are not exactly the “cheapest”. Where is the relationship between the offer of countries to come forward with professional staff and why, in addition to that, with the budget of OOSA is there an intention to finance three staff members? What is the level or grade of such professional staff included in 6?

The second issue uppermost in my mind is as follows. Could we have some clarification as to in which way, readjusting the budget, we might have an impact on other activities of the programme especially space applications, these are very specific programmes and we would like to get clarification for this.

As for 9. Financial implications are not listed it would be interesting to have a cursory overview of that. There is no content under paragraph 9, probably to be inserted later on and the last paragraph puts on an equal footing countries that are those having originally offered resources and countries, such as my own, that have expressed their support for SPIDER but, for the time being, are not in a position to bring in financial resources. So, in the last paragraph in the language we would have to create some distinction between the level of commitment of the various countries mentioned there. That is what I have to say. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Arévalo, for that statement and the questions you have put. I will now hand over to the Director of OOSA for him to answer the various questions that were put on the non-paper.

**Mr. S. CAMACHO-LARA** (OOSA): I will take them in order, there will be some common points that apply to the questions that came subsequently but I will try to then clarify as much as possible and I would invite also my colleagues when they see that I have missed something or have a better idea that they might better contribute to it as well.

I will begin with the question of the budget for 2008-2009. That is still true, right now, we are in the process of the 2008-2009 cycle. Only that, that process is practically completed. On 28 June, the Office will have an interview with the ACABQ, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. This is a group, a small group, and it will use the entire budget of the UN and that happens on 28 June. The process started more or less about a year and a half ago. A year and a half ago we were taking a decision that was going to be the basis for the General Assembly, in October of last year, to agree to establish the process. Nevertheless, in the time frame of November/December we did submit to this same office, the Programme Planning and Budget Division, we submitted with our proposal the request to include three posts. What came back was that the instructions had been, Secretary-General through the Controller and given instructions that there was not to be any increase in any budget section of the UN except for those that the General Assembly had identified specifically, which included peace-keeping operations and other programmes. That meant that we had to accommodate, within the ceiling that was provided for, a budget estimate any support for SPIDER and, as we included in the report of the subcommittee, we have made some provisions since the General Assembly took the resolution to provide limited support for SPIDER. The

work that is going on is provided through that limited support. That limited support is half-time of one professional at the P-4 level which you know, David Stevens, and half-time of an administrative assistant at the G level. That is all the support and my time, which is only part-time, so that is the support that SPIDER has had from the United Nations regular budget up to now. So the work that has been done it is with those resources.

As we could not then fit into that part of the 2008-2009 budget process there is, as I indicated last year, within that same process there is something that is called a contingency fund. It is not easy to get funding from that contingency fund but the purpose of that fund is to be able to accommodate expenditures that were not included in the budget process, it could be emergencies that come up, it can be priorities that are set later compared to the start of the budgetary process. For this to happen, then we would have to go through a process as what we are doing right now. For this to be able to happen, for this to have a chance to happen, there is no guarantee that it would happen. For it to happen, the Committee would need to approve the programme, the work plan, without making any decision on the budget. The Committee needs to be informed that there would be financial implications, as this memo that came from the budget office indicates, it is the prerogative of the Fifth Committee, not of this Committee and not of the Fourth Committee. If the process goes forward, when it goes to the Fourth Committee, the Fourth Committee will get a question that will be, do you want to approve, support this, knowing what the financial implications will be and then there would be a number, that is what this is saying. The Fourth Committee would be provided then with the costs which would be a result of the study that the budget office would carry between now and a few months but certainly before the Fourth Committee. The Fourth Committee then would receive an oral statement that would say, under the term of a paragraph number or two paragraph numbers, that the omnibus resolution would have, the financial implications would be this. The Fourth Committee would then make a decision also on programme only not on budget, that is the prerogative of the Fifth Committee and then it goes to the Fifth Committee and the Fifth Committee then decides whether they provide the resources that are requested or they do not provide it. As I mentioned last year also, there is going to be a competition for funds in the UN. The budget of the UN has not been growing except for adjustments for inflation so it is a shifting of resources among priority areas. What we said last year and what we have been saying this year is that disaster management is a priority area. If this process is going to have a chance in New York it is

only if member States indicate it, in New York, that this is a priority area otherwise no, it would not get the resources. If there is a higher priority area they will get those resources. The resources and the contingency fund will be gone in about a year. At this time in 2008 or a little bit later most of the contingency fund will be gone. So it will go some place but that would not increase the total budget of the UN, it will not increase it because it is part of this budget process. When the budget is approved by the Fifth Committee at the end of this year, it will include that amount of money already. If SPIDER gets any money it will not increase the total budget of the UN. It means that money was considered to be supporting a high priority area.

So, yes it would, when the Fourth Committee meets then there would be the question but it would be the same question that goes to the Committee. The Fourth Committee would not approve a budget.

I will combine the question, another question that came from the United States was, what happens if the three posts are not approved but I will combine it because there were questions on the posts coming from Greece, from Nigeria and Colombia. I will try to respond to the three requests at the same time.

I will begin with why they are called coordinators. The text in paragraph 8 was not intended to be too long. I will take the text and then amplify on what is behind it. It says three programme coordinators, we did not come up with a name for it but I will describe what the partners had in mind when they used the word programme coordinator.

Central management coordination means that the offices need to stay coordinated and there will be a need for somebody from Vienna to be coordinating, that somebody from Bonn to be coordinating with somebody from Beijing and, by consensus, if you want to put it like that, the management of the \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) system will be agreed upon, there will be a number of decisions that have to be taken. At the same time when you look vertically, the programme under the responsibility, the lead for that office, for Bonn, has to be coordinated. Then there is coordination that goes out radially for the support offices. We have 20 countries that have offered support. To make that support happen somebody has to contact, establish a one-to-one contact with the focal point in country A and determine what does your offer consist of. Right now we have offers of support, of say, capacity building, SPIDER needs to know what is that you are offering, what can we count on, how can we put the package together. Are you providing room and board facilities for a number of participants for the

region for x amount of time, are you providing computer equipment, do you have the data. There are a number of things like that that have to be coordinated and right now we are talking about 20 countries and this number will grow. So you can see now why we are putting here one person, this is going to be one person, that fairly soon will be overwhelmed with work.

No, we were not thinking of P-5 level. In the graph, I am sorry, we were thinking only taking as a reference that we need at least expertise of somebody like David Stevens. We are actually thinking about P-4 but it does depend, as our colleague from Greece said, with the job description. The job description has to be put forward and then the budget office looks at the level of responsibility and then assigns a number to it, a level. Our impression was because of the level of responsibility that are being carried out right now that we would be talking about the level of a P-4. Then there is further coordination. We are supposed to \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) SPIDER, are supposed to coordinate without the ongoing initiatives. Which means GEOS, \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) the whole list that you have. Then there will be further coordination because we will also then have to do some coordinating with the focal point, the national focal points. There is a lot of coordination, if you remember the original name for this entity, was \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) because coordination was the key word. SPIDER is going to create all the interfaces but it has to create interfaces to two very different communities, the space community and the disaster management community. That is going to be a lot of work.

Coming to what happens, the last of the questions from the United States. What happens if the three posts are not approved. We did consider that. What would happen is a scale back in the activities. We would have to do different types of rearrangements, we would not be able to accept all the offers that might be made from countries for support because there would not be a workforce. To put together any activity always requires work on both sides. If we do not have these three people then things will go on, we have some other people but we would not be able to carry the level of activities, the interfaces. So, there would be less work, we would not be able to accept as many of the offers that are being made.

As far as how would the regular activities be affected. One of the aims of getting extra resources is to be able to support SPIDER from the UN side without affecting the regular activities. Right now the effect is, what I have mentioned to you that has been for these months, it is half-time one professional and

half-time one administrator. So, yes, it gets affected but the resolutions said that it should be affected as little as possible, I cannot remember the wording but if you look at the resolution the words are there. So, the resolution does not say that it should not be affected at all because then we would not be able to do very much. It is only within the priorities that we might have. What that means is that SPIDER would be affected. If you do not affect the other activities we affect SPIDER.

Regarding the other posts. Yes, there is an offer and you saw on the screen, you saw the other posts in the case of China, you even saw the photographs of people that are beginning to work. When we looked at the work that needs to be done, this has taken several months where each one of places has been analysing, looking at the work that they have to do. So, they come and they tell us ok this is what we need, this is what we are offering, here is the deficit, and we are still going to have deficit even with these three.

So, there will be indications for what are called project posts and that is the type of post that a country offers money to support a project, a particular project. There will be other placements for that I did not know in the beginning that we are going to get too many countries that are going to provide voluntary money for that so we try not to count on those posts because those are imaginary. At this moment those are imaginary.

What the governments are offering what are being called secondments, those are real, so we can count on those. If you remember in the report of the experts they estimated that it would take about 10 people to have this work and if you look at what eventually we ended up coming with, we could have used more resources, three to us, like the minimum to put that is even a little bit less than that one third the experts estimated and actually, as I mentioned right now, the needs will be more so there will be a need to advertise for more support.

I think, Mr. Chairman, unless I did not write something down I covered all the items. I do not know if it was clear but at least according to my notes I touched upon every part.

Thank you for reminding me. There was one more comment that came from Colombia and that was that in the paragraph, I believe it is the last paragraph, where all the offers of support that have been received are listed. First I would say here it is only the ones that have been confirmed. So there are others that have said they are interested in supporting but they have not sent

us a formal communication yet or made a statement here. A colleague from Saudi Arabia made a statement from the floor, so we included Saudi Arabia.

It is true that there are different levels of commitment. Many of these are only indications of the intention to make the commitment once they can see the work plan and they can see this is where I can contribute and that is when they will specify but the letters that we have received say yes, our government is offering to provide and then there are several types of descriptions and most of these are in-kind. It is the expertise, it is the facilities and, in some cases, it could be imagery from some of the countries that have their own satellites. So the range is quite broad as to what is being offered. Expertise is one of the more important things that is being offered there. What we might do is to separate it, in a previous document we actually had them separated. So, we could separate the two groups and then later on, if the reports have been made to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, a different type of grouping could be maybe identified. Once it is easier to see who is actually going to be supporting on a regular basis and who will be supporting on certain points ,type of activities. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Camacho, for those clarifications in response to the questions which have been asked on this document but noted that Brazil wished to speak and he has been waiting for quite a while. So you have the floor.

**Mr. G. CAMARA** (Brazil): I would like of course to state that any action which increases the coordination and increases the collaboration between the member States is, of course, most welcome and most important. What we would like, at this point, not to discuss the posts but to address one issue for the consideration of the plenary is the understanding of the word disaster which is not definitely clear on the document which was provided to the plenary and which can be read into different views. One of the possible views and in our understanding, the view that extends the most, the possibility of the benefits of space-based data is not a tsunami but a global change. Some of you read disaster as a tsunami, something that happens and then goes and then leaves a lot of people damaged. We would like to think that disaster, in the case of space-based observations and the contributions of space-based observations, is much more related to the changes that are taking place on the planet, deforestation on tropical areas for example. That said, if the second understanding of the word disaster management happens then what is needed is a much broader view of what is the United Nations role in

disaster management. We note that some charters like space and major disasters point to a relatively narrow view of the mention of disasters. They only claim we provide the data in the event of a disaster and then in this case they mean tsunami. Our view is, in order for space-based observations to be really useful for anything that we might call disaster management, we need to take a much broader view of disaster which is not spelled out on the SPIDER document as I see. Disaster is not defined anywhere it is simply taken for granted disaster equals tsunami. So I would, from the point of view of reading, you might read it that way. If we try to take the broader view that disasters are indeed things that affect humanity as a whole like the El Niño phenomena, like deforestation, like the melting of the polar icecaps and so on, that the whole discussion of the role on the UN on disaster management becomes much broader and I would even prefer not to refer to the word disaster management just to make the things clear. If that is the case that the work plan could reflect this and the allocation and the contributions should reflect this broader view, for example, the contribution that Brazil of putting free data to African countries without any restraints, starting next year, will be in my view a contribution to the general management of the planet and therefore to management of disasters.

I suggest that the plenary takes a broader view of what disaster means and distance itself to the restricted definitions which is for example used in the Charter for Space and Major Disasters, which in our view is completely restrictive and, it is only in the event of a tsunami that the countries which are signatories are mandated to contribute. This is too narrow, too limited, in a world that is changing too rapidly. Our point is, please let us try to define disaster in a much broader view and define the mandate in a much broader view.

I also take note that the GEO, Group on Earth Observation, which Brazil is making a strong effort is exactly in this direction as trying to understand Earth observation as a benefit to society, to \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) society and I, therefore commend, Mr. Chairman, that COPUOS uses a similar definition and broadens the concept of disaster. Still I would think that the document is not clear at all, mixes emergency management with disaster. In our view disaster is El Niño, disaster is deforestation, disaster is the melting of the polar icecaps. Katrina is of course an occurrence of this global change. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Dr. Camara for his statement. I just wanted to make a comment where, by and by the resolution which set up the SPIDER

programme, I have the French text of the resolution before me and it is more inclined to the second hypothesis that you referred to. It refers to disaster, of course disaster can be interpreted in a very broad sense.

I am getting a little concerned about our time management because it is 5.50 p.m. and we still have Greece, Austria, the United States and Venezuela requesting to speak so I am going to give the floor to Greece but I must ask each of the speakers to recall that there are others waiting on the list.

**Mr. V. CASSAPOGLOU** (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): I am not entirely satisfied by the explanations given by the Director of the Office because I personally could not understand the hierarchy, if I can put it in those terms, the organizational layout of SPIDER. In my opinion, as it stands, it is a rather desperate, fragmented system. The original idea was that everything would eventually come back to OOSA. I have read very carefully CRP.13 and all of the functions are given to the Beijing and Bonn office, what is left for the poor old office in Vienna is just three lines. Now, I wonder whether this is not a case of inverting the roles, that is the first point.

The second one which is even more important to me is that, there is territorial jurisdiction or competence of these two offices. For the liaison office it is not a problem because we know what its role is going to be, that is for sure liaison with international humanitarian organizations most, if not all of which, were headquartered in Geneva. So its role is a sort of go-between but the other two offices, what are they going to do because I just cannot understand if there is not going to be some sort of overlapping or there may be some opposition between them.

Then there is the regional support office what is going to happen there at the regional level. For example, the Bonn office would be responsible for Europe and Africa, the Beijing office would be for the rest of the world I take it, I am not sure I have understood how this is going to work out in practice and how this layout is actually going to be functional. That is my greatest concern. The question is, who is going to have the last word because if we set up two little fiefdoms, so to speak, outside the office *per se* then I am not sure they are entirely consistent with the terms of the resolution. So, perhaps we need to redraft this text in the light of those clarifications that, as far as the name is concerned, we have a job description of the office here but it is not in 13 or 14, there is no mention, no reference of the hierarchy, it seems to be a pyramidal hierarchy as I see it. The office responsible to the General Assembly must be able to play its

steering and controlling role, there is no question of leaving two offices pursuing two policies of their own. This is a fundamental issue from the organizational standpoint and as far as the title is concerned instead of calling programme coordinator, we are talking about programme officers. The coordinator has to be in Vienna.

To conclude I would like to refer to the wonderful example which Austria has set many years ago. Lending young professionals from the Foreign Ministry to work, at the expense of the Federal Government in Austria, for the needs of the Office of the United Nations, OOSA. That is an example, with the two governments or three rather concerned here that is Switzerland, Germany and China that is to loan or donate specialists along the lines of what Austria did three or four years ago. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you. I am going to give the floor now to the delegate of Austria, then the United States and lastly Venezuela so that we can collate all the questions and then that would make life easier for the Secretariat.

**Mr. H. BÖCK** (Austria): With regard to the kind words our Greek colleague said let me also tell you that when I grew up I was always fascinated in Greek history and the relationship between Athens and sport and in particular the attempts to basically gain supremacy, hegemony and the struggle which ensued. \

If I look at the set up of the respective SPIDER organigramme I think within the UN system we actually have moved away a little bit and that is also where this issue comes in, which the Director of OOSA pointed out, which relates to coordination. If I look at the organigramme and the set up of the two offices as well as OOSA in Vienna here, which is also obviously outlined in the General Assembly resolution, we have always felt, and I guess it was pointed out by Dr. Camacho too, that the issue of coordination is an issue that somebody in the office has to coordinate with the person next door. Basically, coordination goes across the whole range of issues as well as activities which are foreseen for SPIDER and which I might foresee actually cover hopefully a global area. The issues there on coordination are not only on a set up which is foreseen with offices in Bonn and Beijing as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs but, as Dr. Camacho pointed out, also with the regional offices, also with various institutions.

If one looks, and this is my second point, at the work plan which is outlined in the document we feel it is actually very expensive, ambitious but

feasible, work plan which distributes respective competencies to offices in Beijing and Bonn as well as to the Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna.

With regard to the hierarchy mentioned. We have always felt this is a cooperative effort, this is a cooperative effort from member States, in this case not only Germany, the People's Republic of China and Austria but also others, which basically presented their support in various ways to SPIDER. On the basis of this cooperative effort we feel very optimistic that even an ambitious work plan, which is outlined in the Conference Room document in front of us, can be implemented.

Finally, from my experience in the UN, as Dr. Camacho pointed out, there is always a competition for financial resources. The distinguished delegate of the United States is absolutely right by saying there is a competition and what happens if and then any request which normally comes in particular to the ACABQ and then finally to the Fifth Committee is looked upon with clear understanding of what is the analysis of the tasks, how can they be fulfilled, is it useful, is it a priority area etc. Looking at, for example, the respective priority areas we have just been involved in a restructuring exercise in the United Nations when it comes to the department of peacekeeping operations and a new office for field support. A couple of dozen posts were actually formed there and the same goes within the United Nations system in a variety of areas which are considered priority areas. We have felt in particular due to our experience in history in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that all the specialists gathered here, when they look upon SPIDER, will hopefully share our view that this is actually a programme with enormous potential and from the Austrian side we have always looked at the potential in particular for developing countries.

Having said that I am also fairly optimistic that, if Committee members agree that this work plan presented here can be implemented, we also should and in our case it is actually necessary to go for the plan outline, to go for at least three posts, financed from the regular budget of the United Nations and, in order to do that and Dr. Camacho pointed that out, what is needed is precisely the support of member States. Finally, what it comes down to is our colleagues, specialists in the Fifth Committee dealing with that issue. If they get the respective input from this Committee which is, after all, the Committee with the specialist knowledge dealing with that issue then we hopefully will succeed in putting this programme on a track which is financially secure in the sense that some support comes and hopefully more will come from, let

us call it, voluntary contribution from member States as well as from the regular budget. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for that statement on behalf of Austria. I would like to give the floor now to the delegate of the United States and I would like to inform delegations that, thanks to the goodwill of the interpreters, we can extend until 6.15 p.m but not a minute further, so we have 10 minutes left.

**Mr. K. HODGKINS** (United States of America): I would also like to thank the interpreters for allowing us to cut into their free time this evening. I will be very brief, there are a couple of questions and observations I have.

The first one is concerning paragraph 8 of the non-paper. It strikes me that this is rather apocalyptic, that is to say unless we have these three posts this entire exercise falls apart, this is the way I read it. So I think this is going to have to be toned down because I do not believe in looking at the work plan and what we are trying to achieve that the only way this can move forward is if we are given three new posts.

The second observation is that I am a bit confused actually as to why we need the three new posts because the way this paragraph is drafted it says, in order to provide a dynamic and effective supervision and coordination needed to accept and integrate the different contributions made by member States. I am a bit confused because what we are saying essentially is that because member States are contributing and offsetting our budget we need more people to handle that. Perhaps I am getting this wrong but it seems that these three posts really are linked to the contributions made by the member States and not actually to doing the real work and maybe that is just mis-reading on my part.

The third point is actually a question, which is. Were these three posts contemplated in the work that we did last year and in February? I am not sure when this arose but again I am reading this paragraph 8 as saying without these three posts this cannot go forward and if we knew that a year ago then we should have made adjustments and if we knew it in February we should have made adjustments but if we are just knowing about it now then I think we have to consider it further and certainly tomorrow we could discuss this. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you, Mr. Hodgkins, for your statement which the Director is taking a note of. I would like to

give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Venezuela.

**Ms. N. ORIHUELA-GUEVARA** (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Just a very brief comment. I would like to endorse what was stated by the delegation of Brazil. This issue is the classical issue of prevention and the question of disaster treatment or response is a crucial issue when it comes to how we deal with disasters in the response process. The question is what technologies are we going to use and if we are going to deal with this we also need to look at the preventative aspects. This only highlights the relevance of what Brazil said. Even when we are still at the infancy of this concept of disaster management, I think in the work plan and in the instruments and documents we have produced, we should be urging investments of all States in terms of satellite contributions to evaluate issues such as desertification and so on. That is upstream before disasters actually happen so I think this is a very important statement Brazil has made on the preventative aspects. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank you for your statement and for your comment which is a very important one. Indeed, in the SPIDER programme you will have seen that one of the things planned is to have very close operational liaison with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and that is very much in the same vein as to what you have said. So, when we talk about disasters, you cannot just confine oneself to providing assistance when they happen and providing relief. We also need to learn some lessons so that we can prevent them in future. That is very much the philosophy which underpins the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction which is a UN strategy.

Colombia, I would like to give the floor to the Colombian ambassador.

**Mr. C. ARÉVALO-YEPES** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Very briefly, I wish to express my delegation's satisfaction and gratitude for the additional explanations and clarifications given to contextualize what Mr. Camacho has given us supplemented by what the representative of Austria said who also contextualized SPIDER in the very vital context and that is the dynamics of what is happening in New York with the budget especially this trend to reduce budgets and the priorities in those budgets. I think Austria made a very important contribution by saying that ultimately it is we as member States in the Fifth Committee who have to rise to this major challenge of supporting the SPIDER programme

which, as I have said from the start of our proceedings, is vital for our country so I am certainly satisfied by the course of the discussion. I do not think there has been any real impact on the space applications programme and that certainly reassures us. Also know very well that the discrimination between the various countries is more of a semantic issue.

As for the three programme coordinators I too would like to plead for a solution to this. I am sure that as we go forward we will see a solution emerging which will satisfy everybody. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank the distinguished representative of Colombia, Mr. Arévalo. I would now like to give the floor back to the Director of OOSA should he wish to provide some answers to the additional questions which have now been asked.

**Mr. S. CAMACHO-LARA** (OOSA): Only to take advantage of the last two or three minutes because I think it might save some time tomorrow.

I would like to make a clarification on the definition of disasters as we have it here. It is true that the word disaster and disaster management depends on who is describing them and where. We are using them, in the sense of disaster management, in all our documents not just these documents but the studies that have been made by the group of experts, is the way the World Conference on Disaster Reduction used it. Which means that disaster management includes all the aspects of disaster reduction which can be the prevention, the mitigation, the early warning, the emergency response and the rehabilitation, it includes all of them. It includes the slow, creeping disasters like desertification, it includes climate change, it includes any aspect of a disaster and in this context, in the Charter it is not true but in this context, it includes humanitarian disasters which is one of the important contributions from the Geneva office. It has to do with situations of refugees, this is not limited only to the \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) disasters.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to thank Mr. Camacho.

So we are now going to close this meeting especially as it is 14 minutes past 6. I think we have all the elements we need to be included into the draft report so that we cover the SPIDER issue in it. That is something we will take up tomorrow. I would like to remind you that we will meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow with an important item on the agenda which is the adoption of the report of the Committee to the General

Assembly. That is item 14. We will try to reflect therein all of the discussions we have had on the various agenda items.

Now I see Nigeria's name plate raised and indeed you did intend, I think, to speak under item 7 not on SPIDER on something else under item 7. Could you please be very quick Sir.

**Mr. A. ABIODUN** (Nigeria): My contribution is very short and I believe it is not controversial. That is throughout this session we had a lot of presentations on education and space but my knowledge of history in this Committee tells me that this Committee started space education, as far back as 1971, when it established the space applications programme. All we get from the Office, it is not the fault of the Office but \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) happen the Office had copied. So I would love to see the Office come up and give us and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well, a 20 minute illustrative presentation on the educational activities of the Office \_\_\_\_\_ (*inaudible*) in society, space and society deliberation because every presentation we have had at this meeting, the Office initiated them and it is important for the Office to give us illustrated presentation, 20 minutes done on space and society. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN** (*interpretation from French*): Thank you for that suggestion which I forward to the Director of OOSA for the practical implementation of the Committee's meetings next year. It is a very important suggestion.

I suggest we adjourn, I would like to thank the interpreters for kindly working well beyond their scheduled time by 15 minutes and we shall reconvene tomorrow at 10 a.m.

*The meeting closed at 6.16 p.m.*