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FIRST COMMITTEE, 1295th
MEETING

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Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL
(Sudan).

AGENDA ITEM 27

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: reports of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union (A/5181; A/5203, chap. VII, sect. IV; A/5229; A/5237; A/C.1/879; A/C.1/880; A/C.1/L.320 and Add.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. NINCIC (Yugoslavia) said that the section of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/5181) dealing with the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, the report of WMO (A/5229) and the report of ITU (A/5237) showed that international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space had made considerable progress during the past year and was entering the phase of practical achievement; the United Nations and the specialized agencies clearly had an important part to play in such co-operation. The agreement reached by the United States and the Soviet Union concerning co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/C.1/880) was also most encouraging.

2. The Legal Sub-Committee had unfortunately been less successful in its efforts. However, the debate in the First Committee appeared to have narrowed the differences between the opposing viewpoints on the problem of formulating legal rules for the peaceful uses of outer space, and the various texts submitted in that connexion by the Soviet Union (A/5181, annex III, sect. A), the United Arab Republic (*ibid.*, sect. E) and the United Kingdom (A/C.1/879) indicated that a common approach might be in the making.

3. While it was fully aware of the need to deal with such practical matters as the problem of rescuing astronauts and spaceships in the event of emergency landings and that of liability for space vehicle accidents, his delegation thought that clarification of the fundamental principles governing future space activities was essential, if those activities were not to

develop in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of world peace. In formulating the principles in question, it was important to bear in mind their possible impact on international relations in general and on specific international problems. Progress in solving the legal problems of outer space must go hand in hand with the rapid scientific and technical progress that was now being achieved. The various proposals and suggestions made in the First Committee should provide the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space with a broader frame of reference for its future work and it was to be hoped that it would make full use of all such ideas and would intensify its efforts in both the technical and scientific and the legal fields.

4. Mr. VAKIL (Iran) said that, although the United States and the Soviet Union had from the very outset accepted the principle that outer space should not be subject to national appropriation but should be open to utilization for peaceful purposes by all States, the advance of space technology had far exceeded that of space law. In its report, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had endorsed the constructive recommendations of its Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in such fields as meteorology and satellite communications. Those recommendations deserved the General Assembly's endorsement. The Assembly should also give sympathetic consideration to the other technical recommendations dealing with such questions as the exchange of information, scientific and technical assistance and the training of specialists. The Legal Sub-Committee, on the other hand, had made no recommendations and had apparently been able to accomplish nothing more than an exchange of views among its members. Although there were various political, scientific and legal obstacles to be overcome in formulating a set of specific rules governing space activities, progress in the exploration of space had been so dramatic during the past six years that a beginning had to be made; it might be well to start by formulating those principles which were less controversial in nature. It was encouraging to note, in that connexion, that the United States and the Soviet representatives had both indicated that their Governments were prepared to work towards an agreement based on the general principles laid down in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI).

5. The reports of ITU and WMO dealt with activities that were of great importance to the developing countries. His delegation hoped that ITU would submit a more comprehensive report after the 1963 session of its Administrative Council. The WMO plan for a World Weather Watch was a worth-while undertaking. His country, whose agricultural development was hampered by the aridity of much of its land area, was particularly interested in the final phase of the plan,

which held out some prospect of measures designed to change weather conditions.

6. He concluded by voicing the hope that the recent agreement between the Soviet Union and the United

States on co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space would lead to further progress in that field.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.