

OUTER SPACE LAW

Since the early 1960's, when the development of outer space law first began to occupy a position of importance on the agenda of the United Nations, Canada has participated actively in the deliberations of the 37 member Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and, inter alia in the more specific work of the Legal Sub-Committee. This sub-committee meets for approximately four weeks each year, and continues to make an exceptionally harmonious and productive contribution to international law and the international legislative process. Legal Operations Division of External Affairs - the U.N. and Legal Planning Section - coordinates Canada's participation in the work of the sub-committee.

The record of this sub-committee, and based on its work, that of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, is impressive. Following upon the "Outer Space Treaty" of 1967, three further Conventions have been adopted: The Agreement of the Rescue of Astronauts (1968), the Liability Convention (1972), and the Registration Convention (1974). Since 1975, Canada has been a party to all of these instruments.* (1)

The work of the sub-committee has now turned to three "high priority" items: a draft Moon Treaty, the elaboration of principles to govern direct television broadcast by means of satellites, and the legal implications of remote sensing; a further residual item, the definition of outer space, continues to be somewhat left aside, partly because of lack of time, and partly because there is insufficient agreement on a realistic basis for such a definition.

Of the three high priority items, least progress has been made on the Draft Moon Treaty. This project, initially proposed by the U.S.S.R. in 1971, has run into a stalemate over lack of agreement (for