

satellites of this kind have been placed in earth orbit or used for lunar or distant interplanetary exploration. This is a small percentage of the total number of satellites placed in outer space. However, because of the potential hazards to mankind and his environment these satellites pose a number of special questions which should be addressed by the U.N. and by this Sub-Committee. The Cosmos 954 satellite is not the first satellite carrying radioactive materials which has malfunctioned and unexpectedly returned to earth. With any increase in the size and number of nuclear-powered spacecraft in future the risks would increase. Clearly the utilization of this technology in outer space calls for special precautions and a special regime of international cooperation designed to ensure the safety and integrity of the human environment.

What is required, in our view, is a measured, realistic and constructive response to the issues raised by this incident. The use of nuclear power in space is a highly sophisticated and evolving area of space technology. It holds out the promise of important benefits to mankind, as well as posing certain grave hazards. Any consideration of the problem must take into account both the benefits and the hazards, with a full knowledge of the technical background. We must approach the question of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in the same spirit in which we approach the question of international cooperation on nuclear power sources on the ground. There are no easy answers and we are not proposing any hasty action.

The over-all objective of our efforts should be to develop a regime for the use of nuclear power sources in outer space which would ensure the highest standards of safety for mankind and protection for the environment. The obligation to avoid damage or harmful contamination to outer space and the environment of the earth is already enshrined in several provisions in treaties negotiated in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other international instruments and principles of customary international law.

In order to carry out the detailed review and technical studies required, we will be proposing the establishment of a working group of technical and scientific experts. Such a working group could be constituted along lines similar to earlier working groups established under the auspices of this Sub-Committee and its parent body, such as the Working Group on