

B. Beyond this principal function, which constitutes an extension of the first phase of ISMA, SIPA would also perform two other tasks.

Firstly, the very accomplishment of the function of collection and interpretation of satellite data makes SIPA an ideal framework for the vital training of experts in photointerpretation. Data transmitted by satellites, even after initial processing, always require interpretation in order to extract the desired information. This skill is still rather rare, while remote sensing imagery will play a growing role in the developing countries and its application to disarmament points to a promising future.

Secondly SIPA could serve as a research unit or centre, either to identify groups of satellites which could contribute to the implementation of multilateral civilian or military programmes, or even to design various possible linkages between ground sensors and satellite-borne detectors in the verification of disarmament agreements. The growing diversity of treaty provisions to be verified and the equipment involved will call for the development of new systems. Indeed, this process may on occasion play a role in the conclusion of new agreements. Generally speaking, the experience accumulated within SIPA would be irreplaceable in identifying new requirements as regards satellite equipment for use in disarmament verification, and in particular in determining whether specific satellites should be developed for each type of agreement, or whether multipurpose systems may be contemplated.

It is expected that the applications of remote sensing from space will develop in various areas, but the multilateral use made of them is still at an embryonic stage. In particular, many countries are still denied the benefits of the existing facilities because their experts lack adequate training.

The proposed agency, with a simple structure and modest costs, should make it possible to overcome this handicap and offer a real testing ground for the development of new technologies.

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